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ONS AT THE LONDON MISSION

BENNETT.

MISSION SERMONS

PREACHED AT

S. PAUL'S, KNIGHTSBRIDGE,

AT THE

LONDON MISSION

OF NOVEMBER, 1869.

BY

WILLIAM J. E. BENNETT,

VICAR OF FROOME-SELWOOD, DIOCESE OF BATH AND WELLS.

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DEDICATION PREFACE.

TO THE EVANGELIST FATHERS OF S. JOHN, COWLEY.

My Dear Fathers in Christ,

It is to you that the Church owes, under God, the revival of Parochial Missions, and it is to you that, above all the other missions which you have so devotedly undertaken, the people of London owe the great work of November, 1869.

To you therefore I dedicate these sermons, forming a very humble part of that great mission in which you asked me to join.

It is very greatly against my own will that they appear in this shape, and I did all that I could that they might *not* so appear, because I am convinced that preaching is *preaching*, and not reading—and that the spirit and life of the pulpit is in the *pulpit* and not in the press. Nevertheless I gave up my own will at the request of those whom I did not like to disoblige.

Will you therefore accept them, such as they are, at my hands, as a testimony of gratitude to you as the originators and leaders in the revived work of English Parochial Missions.

Of this I am well assured, and I think I should have with me nine-tenths of the parish priests of England, that the parochial clergy, however zealous, careful, indefatigable in their work, however skilled in dealing with souls, never can have the power to accomplish with any effect the work which is before them *as long as they stand alone.* I speak as one who has now served his life as a parish priest, both curate and incumbent, thirty-four years—partly in the workhouse of one of our great metropolitan parishes, partly in the wealthy and aristocratic Belgravia, and latterly in a large manufacturing town. These contrasts and varieties may justify me in speaking of parochial work, and this I say, with deep and sorrowful regret in the retrospect of these past years, that had I but been taught, cheered, invigorated and lifted up out of the deadness of my solitary labours by such men as you, the retrospect of a thousand imperfections of my parochial ministrations would not have been as it is now.

The advantage of trained missionary priests living

in community, as you do, and issuing forth as God shall direct them, to cast in their lot for a time with the local parish priest, must be, in every way, immense.

First, to the parish priest himself. If he be young, or inexperienced, the voice of such as you obviating mistakes, guarding against dangers, pointing out schemes and plans for parochial administration, and so leading and furthering him in his perilous way, must be to him an inestimable blessing. And even if he be a veteran and long used to the work—then, in another way, yours would be the voice of sympathy in labour, of consolation in disappointment, and of fraternal love, urging on to perseverance in good works, which perhaps otherwise he might be weary in pursuing. Years and years he may have been at work, but as the years, so perhaps the tediousness, and the longing to rest. The same course of life, the same plans, the same preaching, the same face in the pulpit, the same faces out of the pulpit, no variation—all this may have brought him down to a dead level; and a sad listlessness, if not despair, may have been the result. He has done his best, but no good has come of it, why should he try any longer? He slides down

into a mere hireling, doing a perfunctory work for a perfunctory object.

In the midst of this there comes a Mission. Dear brethren of the priesthood, come from distant places to sympathize with him. New thoughts, new voices, new schemes, new books, fresh objects of interest, roads into the vineyard never yet trodden—all these stir up the flagging labourer and reassure him. It is as the river, whose bed is very narrow by the summer's drought, of a sudden replenished by abundant rain, and flowing again in its wonted channel. And so spring up again life and energy and a joyful return of the love of souls. Just as S. Paul said to Philemon, he says to the missionary. "We have great joy and consolation in thy love, because the bowels of the Saints are refreshed by thee, brother."

And then for the people themselves. The parish priest dwelling amomg them, becomes of necessity their friend, their daily counsellor in domestic matters; he is seen every day at their door, in the church, and at their family gatherings. And though it is said by our Blessed Lord, distinguishing the shepherd from the hireling, that "he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him, for they know his

voice;" yet I fear that this must refer to a higher degree of perfection than is found among us here on earth. Anyhow it does not refer to the pulpit, for experience tells us that the over familiarity of the priest's preaching, the sameness of his manner, the repetition of his arguments, the sameness even of his voice, causes many a sermon to fall to the ground before unmoved hearers, and he ceases to impress.

"Even the pastors who preach the best," says S. Alphonso de Liguori, "often fall under the misfortune spoken of by Jesus Christ Himself of the prophets of their own country. 'Verily I say unto you, no prophet is accepted in his own country.' (S. Luke iv. 24.) And whether they are in their own country or elsewhere, it is always the case that when the faithful are accustomed to listen to their voice, it does not create so favourable an impression as that which novelty so easily produces."

In a report addressed to the Emperor Napoleon in 1806, by the Minister of Public Worship, it is said:—

"Depuis long temps les missions sont connues dans l'église, et elles y font de grand biens. Les pasteurs locaux n'ont pas toujours les moyens de s'accréditer dans leurs paroisses; mais, indépendamment de tout fait particulier, il résulte de la

commune expérience qu'il est des désordres auxquels les pasteurs ordinaires ne pouvent porter remède. Les pasteurs sont les hommes de tous les jours et de tous instants; on est accoutumé à les voir et à les entendre; leurs discours et leur conseils ne font plus la même impression. Un étranger qui survient, et qui par sa situation, se trouve en quelque sort dégagé de tout intérêt humain et local, ramène plus aisément les esprits et les cœurs à la pratique des virtus. De là s' est introduit l' usage des missions, qui ont produit en différentes circonstances, des effets aussi heureuse pour l'état, que pour la religion."*

The Wesleyan system, however we may regret it as schismatic, yet may in this respect teach us a lesson—" fas est et ab hoste doceri." Their system is to change their teachers from time to time, and to impart to them less of the permanent and more of the missionary character. Our own system, the reverse of this, ties down many an enthusiastic, spirited, energetic young priest to one isolated spot for life, and there he dwindles down into a mere machine, uncared for and uncaring. By joining to our own system that of the missions which you have revived, we gain the advantage of both. We

* Manuel du Missionaire, p. 27.

obviate, I will not say *all*, but a great deal of the uninteresting level of our country parishes, and even of many of our great towns which overflow with the excitements of dissent, because of the deadness of the Church.

Change is needed to arrest attention, variety to interest, novelty to win. I do not mean to say that this is right, but I am compelled to deal with it as a fact. Poor human nature flags under monotony. And therefore it is that when the missionary comes among a people as one unknown, curiosity is excited; a new manner impresses; new arguments, or even old ones clothed in a new dress, seize upon the mind; a different style of address, even though it be inferior, contrasts with that to which we have been accustomed, and gains by its mere variety. The missionary in the pulpit is a more strict monitor because he knows no persons; a severer judge because, though he knows sin, he is unacquainted with those who have committed it; he is a more uncompromising reminder, because he has no knowledge but of the abstract necessity of good, and cannot be accused of hinting at individual defection. Thus the trumpet sounds more clearly, and men prepare themselves for the

battle more decidedly. I verily believe that had S. Paul himself been a parish priest, and tied to the same pulpit, his audience would not have been as they were at Athens or at Ephesus. Therefore S. Paul was *not* a parish priest, but a missionary. Yes, I fear it is inevitable. Behold us, as we too often are in our parishes. We are comfortable and easy in our lives, and do not wish to be disturbed. We love each other, parish priest and people. We do not like to wound each other's feelings. The bishop is in his palace or sick in bed. The sentry is dozing. All is quiet. But all is not right. Then comes the missionary, and his brethren. He awakens us by the trumpet of the Son of God, and throws over us a sudden light, where was darkness. He disturbs us in our slumber. He bids us arise, and watch, and he carries us by the vehemence of love to the arms of Jesus, and the salvation of our souls.

You have placed the sermon as the principal work of a mission. But it would not be so, unless it were to lead to that which is to succeed it and be its fruit, namely, confession. And here again is the same advantage, even if not greater, in a stranger over the parish priest. For the same reason, that

hearing a sermon from one to whom you are accustomed, and whom you know familiarly, ceases to impress,—so the parish priest, as one to whom the people are accustomed, is not sought for in proportion as their confessor. It may be, perhaps, that in small matters or in venial sins, the parish priest has his fair share of work as a confessor, but certainly as a rule, in the greater sins, and specially in those to which shame is attached; multitudes, without the mission, would never confess their sins at all. Hence, as you, my dear fathers, well know, your work in the confessional is your principal and ultimate responsibility; that by which you judge the value of your mission whithersoever you go. So says S. Alphonso de Liguori, from whom I quoted before.

"Combien d'hommes, combien de femmes surtout dissimulent leur péchés, rendus muets par la honte, par l'intérêt, ou par la crainte d'être renvoyés sans absolution! Dans les petites localités où les confesseurs sont en moindre nombre, où ils sont de la famille, de la société, où du moins de la connaissance de leurs pénitents, ce fléau de la fausse honte fait des ravages incroyables, et multiplie sans nombre les confessions sacriléges; elles se renouvellent pendant des années et des années, et ne se réparent

pas même à la mort. Les missions sont le seul remède préparé par la divine miséricorde à cette maladie si grave et si commune. Les confesseurs sont étrangers, ils ne connaissent point leurs pénitents, bientôt ils partiront pour ne plus revenir; les prédicateurs font entendre des verités effrayantes qui déterminent à fouler aux pieds la crainte, la fausse honte; l'exemple des pécheurs qui ont déjà trouvé la paix dans un aveu sincère encourage; l'accueil que l'on reçoit au saint tribunal détermine; on fait une accusation complète, et une infinité de sacrilèges sont réparés dans la passé, et prévenus par l'avenir." *

So much is this the case in the foreign churches, and so well understood, that in many missions it is deemed advisable that the parish priest should not hear confessions at all, but leave the whole of that work to the missionaries.

"Ut autem liberius fideles peccata confiteantur, in missionum aut exercitiorum spiritualium decursu, parochi, vicarii, aut alii confessarii ordinarii sapienter *a suis pœnitentibus abstinebunt.*"†

But all these matters are known to you, my dear fathers, better than they are to me.

I pray Almighty God that you may have every

* Man. du Missionaire, p. 12.

† Concil d'Aix. 1852. Manuel. Preface, p. ix.

blessing in your work;—that your community may be strengthened by as many fellow-labourers as you need—true, faithful, and discreet—so that you may go forth and evangelize our towns and villages;—that you may form a nucleus round which may gather many sons of the English Church to "repair the breaches" of past generations of neglect and loss of God among us, and be "the restorers of paths for our people to dwell in."

I am,

Your faithful Brother in Christ,

WM. J. E. BENNETT,

Vicar of Froome-Selwood,

Diocese of Bath and Wells.

FIRST DAY OF THE MISSION.

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 14, 1869.

The Soul.

S. Matthew, xvi. 26.

"WHAT SHALL A MAN GIVE IN EXCHANGE FOR HIS SOUL?"

SERMON I.

THE SOUL.

THERE is no doubt when we speak of the Body. It is a material thing. It is visible, tangible, delights in pleasure which is available to the senses, and is affected by pain—which every one knows to his cost. It is subject to the same laws of measurement, space, and atmospheric pressure as all other material substances are.

I suppose there may be now in this church some thousand of these bodies. Each one of them requires a certain space. Each one has a pair of lungs out of which to breathe. Each one is consuming and decomposing the nutritious parts of the air by which to live. Each one has been sustained and fed throughout this morning by food; each one will go forth in about an hour's time and partake of more food, and to night will rest upon a bed and sleep. Then each one (if it please God) will arise again to-morrow, will apply to its several occupations, labours, and business, and go on plodding in the same way as it did all last week. It will work, eat, drink, sleep (I will not say anything about sin), and thus continue its rounds from

week to week, month to month, year to year,—let us say for some ten or twenty years to come—there is no doubt about all this—as mere materialism.

But, my brethren, what is it that we are doing *here?* Chanting psalms, saying prayers, singing hymns; and now one of these human bodies, set up over the rest, teaches the others, and they all sit in their seats quietly, decorously, and listen. This is not an affair of materialism. This is not a mere aspect of hands and arms: a composition (as our bodies are) of so much lime, water, and gas joined in a framework—like unto an ox or a sheep.

There must be something more than this that has brought us here to day. What is it? You will answer that question, my brethren, quite as well as I can. It is because within that framework of flesh and bone—within that materialism of wonderful construction, having eyes to see, ears to hear, and hands to touch—you have that which gives it life, instinct, vivacity, intelligence, moving-power—THE SOUL.

There is no other animal but man that could do as we are doing now. It is not the number of square inches which each one of your bodies occupies on the seat on which you rest, or the number of square feet of atmosphere which you require to breathe—it is not that by which I am to measure you, or you are to measure yourselves now.

No. It is something in a degree connected with it, but still not it. Here is my mouth which speaks

to you. That is organic. There are your ears through which you take in sounds. That is organic. There is the light which enables your eyes to perceive all round the beautiful colours of the painted glass of these windows. That is organic. There are your own voices joining with the music and singing hymns. All this is organic, material, bodily. It belongs to time. But then beyond it, behind it, invisible, intangible, there lies a power which uses these organs of materialism, and conveys spiritual instruction by means of them from God to you. Do I, when I speak now convey anything of a spiritual meaning to you? Do you feel moved in any way? Is God before you in any way? Can you in the spirit shake off the flesh—for an instant, and be as though you had no body? Can the things of the world — your relations, friends, business, conjunction with men—entirely disappear and be as nought; and you and God be the only beings in the world? Can you imagine that?

Now, my dear brethren, have you ever thought of this in the way I now put it—that you are not mere animals like "the horse or mule that have no understanding?" Have you ever thought that as when Almighty God made man, He breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul, so it has been with every one of you? Have you ever thought that, while the immense superiority was thus imparted to you as a man over other animals, there was also conveyed a responsibility in

proportion to the gift; and that as you were thus elevated in the scale of beings, so you were endangered lest by the loss of the gift so imparted, you should incur something in proportion terrible and overwhelming?

Now I say A SOUL; you, each one, are a soul. What is that? Have you ever thought what it is? What *is* a soul? You at this very present moment are thinking of a body—you cannot help thinking of it—it is all in all to most men. "They rise in the morning and they late take rest, and they eat the bread of carefulness;" what it is they have to eat and drink, and wherewithal they are to be clothed, and in higher things, how much money they may make by trade; or, in still higher things, how much glory they may achieve among men—how much grandeur and reputation—and to be talked about in society: this, or such like, is what their hearts are set upon—*i.e.*, the body. It is that which is so much a part of you that you cannot extricate yourselves from it; it is that which you carry about with you so closely wherever you go—which you thereby mix up and defile with the things of the world—which you pollute, and corrode, and poison with sin—which you now bring with you into God's house, and use as a piece of mechanism to kneel down with, and stand up, and hear sounds, and utter words,—*that* is in reality what you are thinking of even now when I speak of your personality here in God's house. So difficult is it to realize the idea that your body

is not yourself. But it is not yourself. When I speak to you, as now, it is your soul to which I speak; it is your soul which comes here to pray and to hear. It is *my* soul which now is speaking to *your* soul through the organs of the body. It is the spiritual essence of our beings which hold intercourse together, and only that. The soul that preaches, the soul that prays, the soul that sings hymns and psalms to God, the soul that meditates and ponders, and the soul that sins.

But you will be anxious to *define* this soul. What is it? And if I were to answer by saying that it is an immaterial essence, an invisible virtue, a spiritual power, or use any such like philosophical terms, you would still be in the dark. I cannot define it; no man can. But I can approach somewhat by negation. I can contrast it with that other part of you which is your body, and by showing you what it is *not*, in some degree surmise what it *is*.

I say, then, what is your body? Flesh and blood, lime, and water, and gas—a beautiful composition, holding together about (to the utmost) seventy or eighty years, and then going to pieces and crumbling into dust. It has friends and relations that love it, tend it, dress it. It has a vain self that spends a great deal of time in decorating it, and making it look, as it is thought, beautiful. It feeds itself with banquets of eating and drinking. You will see it in the young nursed up with the fashion of dress, and making itself conspicuous to

attract attention. And you will see it in the middle-aged, stooping down at desks and gathering in money over counters. And you will see it in the old, tottering along the road-side in pain and infirmity, crippled, paralysed, and half unconscious; and then go a little further, and you will see it lowered by four cords, in a wooden coffin, down into the earth, so that men may get rid of the sight of it, being in that final earthly state, corrupt, putrid, offensive, and impossible even to look at.

Now has the soul, that other part, anything to do with this? A great deal to do with it. Inasmuch as it can never be separated from the body in this world, so it shares to a certain degree all its privileges, as well as all its pollutions, disgraces, and corruptions. It is born with it, grows with it, is sanctified in baptism with it, is tempted by sin with it, is glorified with it by sacramental grace, and during life is a sharer with it of everything both good and bad. But, when at last worn out by age, or overcome by disease, the body dies; then comes out the soul distinct and separate from its companion, and says, "I cannot die." The body, dropped in the grave, drowned in the sea, burnt in the fire, eaten up by worms, is gone. The soul never goes. Immaterial, it suffers not the accidents of matter. Spiritual, it has nothing in common with the laws of organised bodies; and, therefore, immediately that the breath goes forth from the

body in which it has lived the number of years which Almighty God has allotted to it, that moment the soul flies away some whither, does not die, but goes on living just as before, only without the body. It suffers no decay, no corruption, no cessation of life, no death. It is incapable of death: it lives for ever.

Now then, my brethren, we are in some sort capable of making an estimate of the comparative value of these two component parts—our Body and our Soul. This is what our Blessed Lord desires us to do in the text: "What shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" The idea is suggested here that there possibly might be something which would be a set-off against a man's soul; but seeing there is no other part of a man but his body, it is inferred there may be something in that body which is possible to contrast with his soul. And, really, when one looks round, it does seem as if men thought so. The heathens had no idea (at least a very partial one) of the immortality of the soul. They knew that there was a sentient and living spirit within a man, because they could not help seeing that by that spirit man was superior to the brutes; but they had no perfect notion of a soul which was to live after death for ever. Therefore, in them, to cultivate the body was but natural; to dress it, feed it, ornament it, elevate it in the world, encourage its vices, indulge its passions, was to be expected; but when Jesus Christ came He specially taught as

the keystone of His religion the immortality of the soul, and by the mere fact of immortality came the inevitable conclusion how utterly inferior the body must be. Thus all along we have the teaching of a state of existence for the soul after death which is Eternal. "God hath power to cast both body and soul into hell." After death there is described universally as the Christian Faith, a day of judgment, and that judgment pronounces for or against souls eternally.

My brethren, it is not any deficiency of knowledge of this doctrine of which we need complain. It is not of a denial, a positive denial, that the soul exists after this life that we need complain. There is plenty of this knowledge—abundance of the expression of this faith. But it is of the most extraordinary contradiction in practice which vitiates that knowledge and destroys that faith of which we complain. For I would put it to you as reasoning men—not only as Christians with this faith in you, but as reasoning men, who would naturally upon a premiss of undoubted truth build a conclusion in correspondence with it. Would you assert that the things you saw, the words that you heard, the general tone and look of the men with whom you met, was of the soul? Would you say that they looked, spoke, acted, as though they were beings who had souls. Is not the whole concern of life, from beginning to end, about the body? How to get on, most to make money, to look best, to dress finest, to get the

best places, to enjoy the greatest establishments, to beat other men and get above them, to destroy their policy and make our own. Every one knows it.

Suppose Almighty God were to vouchsafe to your view a sight of the souls already gone from this world, what a fearful, tremendous, awful sight it would be. What would it disclose ?

If we could see Paradise—the place of Abraham's bosom—and see souls there, that indeed would be beautiful. But, in proportion, how many millions not there. Where then ? In hell—gone there (or some place equivalent to it) at once—for they died in sin—wilful, unconfessed, unabsolved, unrepented sin, loved and clung to to the last—and so there they lie in an enclosure of flames of fire, like unto hell—equivalent to it—suffering pains and miseries which it is impossible for human language to describe. Now what impression do you think such a sight would make upon your own life ? An examination of conscience would inevitably shew you such sins unrepented of which, continuing to be unrepented of, would plunge your soul into the same abyss. Those souls that you might see have been no worse than you, therefore your punishment, were you to die now, would be no less than theirs.

But how should I find you this time next year ? How should I find the ball-room, the theatre, the market-place, the stock-broker's office, the public-

house on Saturday night, and the magistrate's court on Quarter-session Day? Should I find any difference? I know, (and you, would agree with me,) I should find no difference. Why should I find no difference? Because in the men that I am describing the body is all—the soul nothing. They *have* souls (and the souls that they have they never can get rid of). Their souls are not annihilated after death: they must live, for they never can die; but then this is what they have done—they have given their body in exchange for their soul. Jesus says "What shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" And they have answered "my body." My flesh, my world, my passions, my brutal instincts of eating and drinking, my drunkenness, my fornication, my lying, my cheating, my injustice, my violence, my swearing and cursing, my hatred of God and of His Church, and of Her Sacraments, my refinements and my delicacies, my accomplishments and my beauty, my philosophy and my learning, my statesmanship and my political greatness, my riches and my power—all *that* I have given in exchange for my soul. And, therefore, going on in this way, what must be the result. The same as in that view you have had of the souls of the past. You may see in prospect your own souls as certainly as God, on my supposition, has vouchsafed to you the sight of those that are gone.

But now what of yourself? Will you kneel down

by your bedside to-night? Will you shut too the door? Will you individualize your soul, *i.e.*, take it out of the company, the habits, and the judgments of men; take it away from father, mother, brother, sister, wife: strip it—strip it naked—let there be no veil between it and God; and then, so stripped and naked, will you let God say to you? "What shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" Oh, surely, you will answer—nothing. This precious gift of God; this eternal life which is before me; this glory of seeing God, and being with God for ever; this shall never, never run the risk of being lost for the vanities and follies of a day. I come to Thee, O my God; with my whole heart I come to Thee. There is my world, my fleshly passions, my sins, my ambition, my vain-glory. There is my pampered body, my loved self-will, my enjoyments, my pleasures—all, and every one I give up, abandon, hate, forsake, repudiate, cast out; for there is nothing that can possibly come up to or compensate for the loss of my soul.

Now, my Christian brethren, supposing you to join with me in such thoughts as these: I beseech you to come and fulfil them in the Mission of which you have had notice. What is this Mission for? It is simply to undo the work of the devil, who is at this moment carrying off thousands of these souls because they have been, and are, so exceedingly absurd and foolish as to give their bodies in exchange for them.

You must let me speak to you, dear brethren, very faithfully; as a mission priest I know nothing of individuals in this congregation. I am blind to riches, or greatness, or aristocracy, or power. I see no personality; I see only souls—souls that may be lost, or souls that may be won. Masters of families, great lords, heads of establishments, servants, tradespeople, labourers, mechanics, I see in them all nothing but souls that may be through some delusion at this moment lost in the sins of this miserable body in which they are for a time encased. I see all sorts of miserable infirmity, in *souls*, weakness, presumption, lukewarmness, indifference to God, neglect of His worship, loss of His faith; and I ask them to come to this Mission, and undo all this: to use the twelve days (in which we, the two mission priests, are to labour for you morning, noon, and night) in the way in which Almighty God so urgently calls upon you to do. I hope,—I believe, (with the permission and help of your affectionate and loving parish priest,) the plan is efficiently laid down. *Instruction classes*, in which familiar explanations may be made. *Sermons* every day twice, catechising of the little ones; for they must never be forgotten, (the hope of the flock, the ground-work of the next generation, who will have to fight the battle of the Church, which we are only just beginning). And then also there will be your private needs, spiritual direction, doubts, difficulties, questions of moral

trouble, nay, in many, actual sins, perhaps MORTAL sins, which must be got rid of at all hazards by confession.

Now, my brethren, some of you that are rich and sit in pews may think that this Mission is very good for the poor, for your servants, for what you call your inferiors; and so you may, out of a sort of condescension, patronise it for others, but keep aloof from all the instruction of it yourselves. Within your own mind you may be thinking that you yourselves are quite safe, that you know quite enough about religion, and about the Church: in fact, you being rich and well educated are quite above this sort of thing.

Oh, my dear rich brethren, let me tell you with all affection (if only you will bear with me) this Mission is for *you*. Remember Dives in the parable. Lazarus, the poor man, the uneducated man, the ignorant man, was saved. Dives the rich man, clothed in purple and fine linen, as you are, and faring sumptuously every day, as you do, was lost. Remember also our Lord's warning—"The first shall be last, and the last first."

I speak to the soul. I do not speak to the body. I do not speak to your establishments, or to your estates, or to your accomplishments, or to the sums of money that you have in your banker's hands: all that is of the body. I have nothing to do with that, but with the soul. For your soul, when stripped, as it will be one day of all that external meretricious acci-

dent, will be just the same as the soul of the poorest beggar that stops at your door and asks you to give him alms.

Can you bear with me for saying this? Can you go out of church without being ruffled at your preacher telling you that he only loves you for your soul; that he *does* love you for your soul; that he wants to save it, along with that of the poor man, because he knows that you have just as much need of warning, nay perhaps, as God may know, a great deal more need of it.

Do not then *patronise* this mission work, or keep aloof from it, but lower yourself down a little for salvation's sake, and come and join in it. Pride is the great sin against which you have to contend. Pride in some shape. Get rid of it. Come and join with your brethren all over London these next twelve days, and learn that Christianity is the religion of humility.

But there must be sincerity in it, no shams or pretences. There must be heartiness in it; in us that come to you, in you that come to us. Get rid of fear and reserve. Get rid of etiquette, and formality, and stiffness of speaking. Embrace us as we you—in love. Get rid of suspicion and distrust. You that are servants or in the lower positions of life, get rid of shyness. Come to us readily, easily, freely; for be assured that as it is love alone that has brought us here for the salvation

of souls and the glory of God, so you will send us back sadly disappointed if you do not make use of us.

Finally, dear brethren, take us as the messengers of Christ, coming to do what we can, (though in earthen vessels,) your servants for Jesus' sake.

SECOND DAY OF THE MISSION.

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 15, 1869.

Sin.

Romans vi. 11.

"RECKON YE ALSO YOURSELVES TO BE DEAD INDEED UNTO SIN."

Sermon II.

SIN.

I spoke to you, dear brethren, yesterday, of the body while it is yet alive, this body which we carry about with us here on earth. But I speak now of this same body, only in a different state—dead—a dead body.

To most of us it has happened, either in our intercourse with others or in our own families—our own beloved ones—when it has pleased God to visit them with sickness—long pining sickness, sudden accident, or infirmities of age—to look upon one who is dead. The light of the eye is gone—it has no fire, it has no spirit; the hand rests by the side, or across the breast, helpless; the whole aspect of the countenance cold, meaningless. There is no power any longer to move, there is no will to act, there is no thought to agitate, there is no imagination to excite, there is no impulse to stir. It is a mere clod of earth — passionless, powerless, noiseless, cold, dark, for ever and for ever still.

But you remember, maybe, what it *was*. In the case of some—I might say many—you may remember, or you may have heard of them—what, before

that awful stillness came, there used to be in that dead body. It was once a man such as you or I may be now. It had energy, activity, a strong will, violent impulses. That eye, which stares without a meaning now, used to burn with fire—the fire of wrath, anger, lust; that hand now cold as the marble, and still as the night, used to be foremost in every kind of fierce activity, even to violence, rapine, contention, and murder. That foot, now passively resting on the couch, used to be prompt to run to every gratification of the will which moved it. That whole body lying there, the clod of earth which you see it to be, used to have a mind, a spirit, an essence within it which drove it about hither, and thither, to gratify its various impulses, wishes, desires, passions. It used to be but one scene of fierce war against itself, and others, and God — restless, perturbed, vindictive, lustful, wrathful, cruel. Oh, what is this change? Is it not a happy change? It is death! Is it not *better* for the eye to rest in that peaceful calm than in its former fury? that hand to be now powerless which was only active in wickedness? that brow to be chill and cold which was only burning for some impulse of self-will? that whole body to be ready to be dissolved in silent forgetfulness, than to be used in the fierce outrages of its uncontrolled animal and brutal nature?

It is dead. Oh great blessedness! You cannot speak to it nor it to you; but it cannot speak any more blasphemy against God. It is dead. You

cannot bring it up to walk with you along the road, but neither can it go to its former haunts of lustfulness, of gluttony, or of drunkenness. It is dead. You cannot move it to the market-place, the counter, the factory, the office; but neither can it move itself any more to its former cheating, fraudulence, covetousness, lying. Ah yes, it is dead. But whatever drawbacks you may think there are in that, this blessedness it surely has,—it has no power, no capacity, no will to sin any more. It is dead; but it is "dead indeed unto *sin*."

Now, my brethren, what that dead body is to sin, we ought also to be, even while we are here in the flesh, as Christians. The same incapacity, powerlessness, want of will to sin, ought to be in us as children of God now. We ought to present ourselves — our souls, bodies — as perfect "a *living* sacrifice," as that body is a dead sacrifice, in its powerlessness to sin. Our thoughts ought to be as free, our will as motionless, our every member of the body, wherein lurks the seat of passion, as pure as that passionless flesh which you see before you; for so it is said, as being Christians, that we are planted in the likeness of Christ's death; that, "as he that is dead is freed from sin," so are we as Christians —freed from sin though still alive, because we are "buried with Him by baptism unto this death." All the natural, animal impulses; all the flesh or carnality of our thoughts; all the worldly or covetous desires ought to be abolished, cast out, annihilated;

we ought to be "crucified" in this death, knowing that our old man—that is the natural flesh—and sin is crucified with Christ; that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we might not serve sin.

But, my brethren, are we so? Are we anything like this? Is the life which we lead here in this world anything approaching such an abolition of sin as is described by the figure, "dead unto sin." You see a snake crawling along on the earth, a nasty, venomous thing; you ought to go and kill it lest it kill you, instead of which you take it into your bosom and warm it; then it stings, and the life that you have given it is your death. You behold a tree in your garden, of which you know the berries are poisonous, and you know you ought to cut it down for safety. You cut down the stem, level it to the earth, and then you think you have killed it. But lo! all round the original stem spring up a multitude of little shoots which you do not notice, and think of no consequence. The tree is not dead; you have cut down the stem but not taken out the roots. The life that you suffer to go on in the untouched root is your death. So of sin. You need not be a monster of lust, or a furious murderer, or a miser hoarding up gold, or a drunkard, or a blasphemer; but you may have within and about your heart, and in your daily life, a number of shoots of little sins, which are all alive and feeding on you, and destroying you day by day because you have not extracted

the root. Try whether this is not so. Try whether you can safely say that every breath, every stain, every poison, every offshoot of the seven great deadly sins, is gone out of you. Is there not some lustful passion, touch, look? Is there not some anger at things done against your will? envy at others' superiority? jealousy of their love for others instead of yourself? fondness for pleasure—indolence in work—desire of things which God has not given you? If so, there is sin. It may be that man's eye does not detect the sin; we may be very specious, very clever in concealing, or quick in pretending; we may even seem to ourselves to be very good at any rate—very fair—quite as good as others. But we are not "dead to sin," as God would have us to be. No, there it is; it rankles in us still; it stains us all over; we are full of its impulses. It reigns in secret (if it do not openly), and vitiates and pollutes every hour of our lives.

But now, dear brethren, let us consider more accurately what this sin is of which we speak. If we want a definition of sin, you have it readily in the Epistle,* "Sin is the transgression of the law." If you want to know how deep the mischief is in the soul, you have it again in the Epistle, "Whosoever sinneth hath not seen Him (Jesus Christ), neither known Him." It obliterates and destroys all perception of religion. There can be no faith; it is abolished and destroyed; and a man is literally an

* Ep. of the Day, 1 S. John iii. 4.

unbeliever—a denier of Christ—an atheist—who continues deliberately and wilfully in any course of sin. If you want to know the source of sin, you have it again in the same Epistle—"He that committeth sin is of the devil." There can be then no doubt in the mind as to the horrible, atrocious, pestilential, destructive character of sin. Acts of sin, sin deliberately committed, persevered in against the knowledge of right imparted to us by reason or by a Christian education; any one of those deadly sins which are set before us by the Church—sloth, envy, anger, lust, gluttony or drunkenness, pride, covetousness; any course of life deliberately pursued by one who knows what the Ten Commandments are, which he must do from a child who has learnt the catechism — that state of life, coming from the devil, associates the man who commits those sins with the devil. The devil and he are brothers; they join together against God. Such a man no longer knows Christ; Jesus is no longer to him a Jesus—a Saviour; all is gone from him. His faith is gone—his salvation is gone: and after this life, if no repentance takes place, he must abide for ever in hell with him whom he thus deliberately chooses for his brother, and pattern, and friend. "He that committeth sin is of the devil."

There is one very sure way by which we may judge of the magnitude of anything: by its effects. You pass along the street some day, and behold that which for many years you have remembered as

a fair and stately palace (as, *e.g.*, the Houses of Parliament some twenty-five years ago), you behold the whole mass of building fallen to the ground: you behold the charred timbers, the molten lead, the crushed walls, the roofs besmeared with smoke, and the embers smouldering for days, in one great débris of ruin. What has done this? Fire! Then what a terrific power fire must be. Or you pass along that which you have been used to behold as a fair and beautiful meadow, smiling cottages scattered here and there, and the cattle feeding in gentle security, the sheep browsing in the valley, all quiet, all peace, all joy; but you pass by again the next day, and behold (as in that great inundation at the waterworks, some years ago, at Sheffield), the whole is gone! houses, cattle, men, women, children, swept clean off the face of the earth; slime, mortar, bricks, stones, rubbish, all one miserable desolation. What has done this? Water! the bursting of a wall which held the water back. Then you say—What an irresistible power water must be!

Thus then in sin. What are the three great destructions of the world, and of man? You remember them set forth in David's punishment, when he had committed a great sin. The three things which God set before him were these—war, pestilence, famine. We always recognise from this, (we acknowledge it in our national confession,) that these terrible chastisements are God's hand pointing out sin. Look at them then in the history of the world.

What are those scenes of desolated fields, long lines of barren territory, meant of God for the fruits of man's sustenance; now wasted, parched, dried up, blasted by the wrath of man? What are all these scenes of piled-up corpses of the dead, or bodies of the mutilated living, those cries of thirst and of anguish, and groans of pain? What are those tears of the widow and of the orphan, the bereaved mother or the mourning father? What is this that I see? The fairest and the best, the beautiful, the brave (meant to live and be holy, and be good; meant for God's honour and His praise), now suddenly cut off in the midst, and passed away in a moment as though they never had been.

And it is not only in these great catastrophes of ruin, but everywhere and at all times, more or less. Universal nature is the testimony of the power of sin. We are apt to say, and indeed we should be ungrateful were we not to say so, that our God is merciful, and good, and loving: in one aspect we are sure of it. But then, whence is it that on every side destruction does its continual work; all things preying upon and opposing each other. The elements of nature so opposed that they each are ever operating to decompose and corrupt the other; the animals endued with life—but life given the one to be devoured by the other; and whole tribes perishing to sustain the life of other tribes, which in turn succumb before the violence of others: life fed upon death, and death created to sustain life. And whence

to man—man himself taking part in this! lord of the inferior tribes; but only to make them the food of his own miserable flesh; that flesh in turn to become corrupt, and become the prey and food of foul worms and noisome creeping things, from which in life he turns away in loathing? Whence is all this most wonderful (apparent) anomaly and confusion? Why beauty? Why order? Why perfection? Why system and arrangement? Why mercy and love, evidently intended in every thing we see? Why life, breathing out in such harmonious infinitude, and with such aptitude for happiness, but then suddenly cut off and disarranged, and terminating without exception in one universal power—sin.

Oh! look around; look everywhere—above, below, in the heavens, on the earth. Do the elements become organs of destruction, instead of life and health? The cause of it is sin. Does the lightning descend and blast our fields instead of warm and ripen them? The cause of it is sin. Does the stormy wind rage on high and the hurricane spout forth its fury, destroying the labours of man? The cause of it is sin. Do the waters rage and swell and overflow the beds of rivers or the boundaries of seas? The cause of it is sin. Does the animal creation rise up, one part against the other, and devour life—one preying upon the other—instead of (as God originally made them) dwelling in harmony and love? The cause of it is sin. Do men forge deadly weapons and train themselves with purposed

skill, and rush forth in armed bands for carnage and for blood? The cause of it is sin. Do men suffer weariness, labours of body, anxieties of mind; the midnight lamp of study in search of knowledge, or care for provision of life? The cause of it is sin. Do men brood over gold, and defile themselves with the pollution of riches—plotting, scheming, haggard, enfeebled with care? The cause of it is sin. Do you behold that profligate corrupter of holiness, sitting on the seats of rank and wealth—the Dives of purple and fine linen, and the sumptuous farer every day—selfish, proud, luxurious? That is sin. Do you see that jealous, envious, brooding temper—that ambitious, self-seeking, vainglorious temper — that irritable, fretful, impatient temper—that angry, furious, violent temper—that avaricious, eager, covetous temper? All that is sin. Go where you please, look upon whom you will—the public street or the secret chamber—the theatre of the professedly profane world or the specially sanctified house of God—be your occupation pleasure or be it worship—be it duty or be it even prayer itself —through it all will enter this all cankering, destroying, polluting sin. See how it is described by Holy Scripture. Our "inward part" (*i.e.*, our essential nature) "is very wickedness;" "it works in us all manner of concupiscence;" it "wars in us;" it "reigns in and over us;" it "deceives us;" it "slays us." It is called the "lust of the flesh," the "body of sin," the "law of the members," the

"law of sin," the "law of death;" and S. Paul, sums all up by an expression of seeming despair in the contemplation of it, "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"

O my brethren, are we really sensible that we are living in this frightful state? Do we feel it? Does it come home to our minds, or do we go about the world from morning to night and think nothing of it? We are full and abundant in verbal profession about it. In our prayers, confessions, litanies, we are full of words asserting it, but it is a very great question whether these words are not too often used without any reflection of the idea within the mind which the words would represent. It is this to which alone we can attribute the fact of the perpetual repetition of prayer, of the perpetual iteration of acts of worship, of the continual recurrence of congregations to hear sermons, of the constant handling of the word of God, talking of it, and reading it, and commenting on it; and yet, withal, the removal of the great curse of our nature out of our hearts as remote as ever. Men do not realize what sin is. They do not see it (as I have now tried to show you it) in everything around them that is foul, or ugly, or violent, or destructive. If they would but get this habit—if they would but realize to the inner mind that everything within them or without them participates of sin, because God meant everything to be good and they see it is not good—then would they shrink from, and keep aloof from, and

shudder at, and fear, where now they so frequently indulge, or laugh at, or play with the very snares which Satan sets to catch them.

My brethren, what you must do is this; you must try to obtain a clear and definite knowledge of what sin is—its nature, its working, its effects. If you had been made as one of the beasts of the field, without knowledge of God's law, without a conscience, without a soul, then sin would not have been in you; but now, having a knowledge of God's law, knowing right and wrong, and feeling in yourself (as you must) that you have done wrong continually—that wrong is your sin. Though you may not be able to define it as a logician, you know it as a Christian. But then you heed it not; you will not stop to think of it; you will not look it in the face. There are men who go about their daily task of labour, who plunge into business, who hurry on from care to care, who all the day long seem to be made for nothing but this world here before them. Do they ever think and feel that they (among the thousands around them) are forming that aggregate mass of sin which caused the Son of God to descend upon this earth and die upon the cross? Do they ever call to mind that it is their own special individual state of sinfulness, as forming a part of that aggregate sinfulness, that crucified the Son of God? Do they feel any weight, or burden of sorrow on their souls that thus it should be? Alas! no; I fear not. They hear of misery and woe all

around them; they witness many horrible scenes of man's wretchedness; they are aware that if ever they themselves are, for the time, free from pain or punishment, still multitudes of souls around them are suffering in bodily pain, or sickness, or mental anguish and distress, all the result of sin; and yet with a deaf ear and a seared heart, they go on in their unmoved course, and think that it is no concern of theirs, that it will never reach *them*, they are no sharers of it. They have read in former days, or they have learnt as boys the Ten Commandments, and they used to think them something of a bond; but now they are too manly to heed such nursery tales. They have another law now—their own will. They used to reverence authority; religion was something; they were taught a moral code of self-restraint and obedience. It is gone now. Pleasure is the only guide: self—the world—the flesh—the only delight. They used to be taught about God, the merciful and great God, Jehovah; the saving and loving God, Jesus; the life-giving and sanctifying God, the Holy Ghost; but all this is past as a dream of the night. They have another god now—an idol of their own choosing—an image in their heart from which they never turn their eyes,—SIN. This indeed they love, they cling to, they caress. They adore it. They draw it closer, and closer, and closer still every day; and perceive not that it is the subtle serpent, whose sting is everlasting death.

THIRD DAY OF THE MISSION.

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 16, 1869.

Repentance.

S. Luke xv. 7.

"JOY SHALL BE IN HEAVEN OVER ONE SINNER THAT REPENTETH."

Sermon III.

REPENTANCE.

I trust, dear brethren that you have thought over what I said last evening on the nature of sin; that you have applied it to yourselves, that you have taken it home, as of necessity attaching to every one, more or less, and have perceived that in that great power of the devil permitted to exist in the world, you have had, or perhaps do have now, your share.

The question then is, "How shall I escape the penalties of this grievous state? Being, (as I confess myself,) full of sin, what shall I do to be saved?" "Repent ye and be converted that your sins may be blotted out." That is the answer. But then another question arises—"What is Repentance?"

Supposing, upon a review of past sins, a life in which either some one great and terrible sin has been committed, or some leading habitual sin lies broadcast on the character, involving a total forgetfulness of God—supposing, I say, in such a case, you were now to be smitten with a sudden overwhelming despair, a compunctious visiting of the conscience such as to arrest and paralyze your whole being, and you were to

be cast down in utter misery in the recollection of the sins which you have committed; would that be Repentance? No, it would not; for Judas Iscariot, who betrayed his Lord for thirty pieces of silver, had all this. It was Remorse, pressing on a terrified conscience that drove him to suicide. Remorse, but it was not Repentance.

Supposing that a person were to be overwhelmed suddenly in some deep and fearful chastisement of God; bodily sickness, a frightful accident, the breaking of a limb, fever, a paralytic seizure, either in himself or those whom he loves. This compels him to withdraw from his usual course of life; and he is of necessity driven to think, to consider, to see God's Hand visibly upon him; and then he begins to review his past life. The sins of his youth rise up before him. At such a time, and at such a place, and with such a person, I remember I did this, or I omitted to do that; I was careless, stupid, reckless; I would go on in a course of wickedness, notwithstanding all the remonstrances of friends, and my own conviction of right. And now this chastisement has come; I have lost everything; all is gone. The blessings that I might have had are turned into curses, and here I am in this miserable plight. I might have been, oh what might I not have been! But see what I am! Would that be Repentance? No, it would not. Esau had that kind of feeling when he found that Jacob had received the paternal blessing instead

of himself. He had not cared for it before; he had preferred the reckless life of the world. The birthright of his special privilege as the first-born he sold, because he was hungry—i.e., he sold his birthright for the pleasures of the flesh; and then, when he found himself punished, and everything taken from him, he sought to recover what he had lost merely because he was thus punished; "he sought repentance carefully with tears, (it is said,) but he could not find it." He chafed under his punishment; he was vexed under it, fretted under it; but there was no feeling in him of true Repentance.

Sometimes it happens that a man finds that he has made a mistake. There is an old proverb, "Honesty is the best Policy;" but in opposition to this, (not believing it,) a man has been guilty, let us say, of fraud or forgery in business, cheating, lying, false weights in trade, short measure, taking an unfair advantage, tyrannizing over the weak. Manufacturers oppress the poor to make fortunes, overwhelm their bodies with undue labour, and destroy their souls for unjust mammon; and the poor, on their side, sell their bodies at an unjust risk for daily gain, and care not either for their own souls or their children, or aught else of their spiritual duty to God. And then, after all, they do not thrive, they do not get rich as they wanted to do. Poverty comes; bankruptcy arrests them. Their unjust dealings are exposed; even the world sees through them and sets them down at their just

value. And so they are disappointed. They have not, after all, got what they risked everything to obtain. Even the very god mammon, in any of its various ways, is denied them for their worship, and they are vexed, annoyed, disappointed. Is such a feeling as that Repentance? No. Simon Magus, a clever but a reckless and covetous man, seeing the great power exercised by the Apostles by the laying on of hands, offered money to obtain a similar power, because he thought, (Jew-like,) that by paying some ready money down he might in a kind of usury acquire the power of gaining more afterwards. It was a piece of fraud, cheating, and hypocrisy. When he was rebuked by S. Peter he found his mistake, and he said in disappointment, "Pray ye to the Lord for me that none of these things come upon me." But it was in vain; his being thwarted in his wicked projects, his having made a mistake, was not repentance. His subsequent life shews this, for he went about pretending to divine power, opposing the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and at last perished in a most awful manner under a manifest judgment of God.

Now, my dear brethren, from all this, what do we gather? Remorse is not repentance. Fretting under chastisement is not repentance. Disappointment is not repentance. And why not? Analyse those three cases of Judas, of Esau, and of Simon Magus, and you will observe that in each of them there was nothing more than a reflection upon self.

You may reduce all of them to one point—Selfishness; and this selfishness, in its various aspects, is to be traced up to the deadly sin of anger. A person may be angry with himself; we often say so. Judas was angry with himself because he had committed a most flagitious act and felt he was a traitor, disgraced in the eyes of men. Esau was angry with himself because he found that he had lost a valuable blessing. Simon Magus was angry with himself because he found that he was outwitted in his money schemes and detected in his hypocrisy. Thus, then, we infer that there must be some very different feeling from either of these three to constitute true repentance. We should find it, and prove its truth in two considerations:—

I. The object, in reference to which the feeling of the mind is kindled, and—II. The sort of feeling which it is.

1. The object must be, not self, but God; 2. The feeling must be, not of anger, but love. This is described shortly under these two words—attrition, and contrition.

The first, attrition, is a feeling of sorrow, pain, disgust, dissatisfaction, engendered by a retrospect of sin—so far as it concerns self—in the manner of Judas, Esau, or Simon Magus. Contrition is the feeling of the same sorrow, pain, disgust, dissatisfaction—in no way regarding self—but in the sole idea of having offended God. We look back upon a sin committed; it may be that a just punishment

has attached to it, or it may be not. It may be that we stand in the world and before men guilty, and justly censured, or it may be not. That has nothing to do with the question; for, as you, my brethren, very well know, there are many sins; 1st, such as the world does not consider sins; and, 2nd, such as the world never knows any thing about —sins of the flesh in private; sins of which no human being can know any thing; *e.g.*, sins of thought, sins of the imagination, sins of intention. But of all such there is need of repentance quite as much as of the more aggravated sins which the world does know of. The question is not, "Have I offended the magistrate? Have I come under the observation of the law? Have I offended public opinion?" But have I offended God? The law of Almighty God, and the opinion of men, are two very different things. "I am sorry for something which I have done." Why am I sorry? Unless it be answered sincerely and cordially, "Because I feel that my great and good God, my Saviour Jesus Christ, my guide and teacher, the Holy Ghost, He to Whom I owe everything, and upon Whom solely I depend, it is He that I have injured, wounded, grieved by my sins. I say, unless all this is felt in the heart it is not contrition; it is only the attrition of the world, that of Judas, Esau, or Simon Magus.

But, supposing you honestly and cordially look into yourself, kneel down in your closet, shut to the door, and, with God only and yourself—no one else

having anything to do with you—and so examining your life; you look up and see Jesus, the holy, righteous, pure, the meek, the gentle Saviour; you look up and see Him in His Passion contending for you; see Him in His agony, with great drops of blood running as sweat from His Sacred Body; see Him on His Cross hanging, in the derision and the offscouring of men, in order that for you He might conquer the devil, and open for you a way to Heaven; and then, so reflecting, the feeling comes upon you: "This is my doing; the sin which I committed yesterday, the course of sin I lived in for some years (from such a year to such a year), the thoughts and imaginations I indulged, the words I spake, the deeds which I did; *they* were the things which brought this about, and I, by my own personal wickedness, contributed to do it: every sin which I committed, my fleshly lusts indulged, my self-will recklessly pursued, my disobedience to precepts which I acknowledged, my fear of man in shrinking from their ridicule, or shame before the world in confessing truth; all these several sins as they arose from day to day, were so many nails which I drove with my own hand into His Sacred Body"—then you are approaching something like contrition. Very likely men do not know anything about these sins. That is no matter. It is because of these that you have offended God, and have crucified the Son of God afresh, and therefore it is, and only therefore, that you cast yourself down in penance

and hate yourself, and say, "O my God, have mercy upon me, for I have sinned."

Then, indeed, you are approaching something like repentance, because it is hatred of sin springing from the love of God. Punishment, suffering, loss of man's opinion, degradation in the world! What is all that? The true penitent rejoices in that. It is not, at any rate, that which he cares about. All that he cares about is that he has hurt God; all that he thinks about is the baseness and abomination of sin in the sight of God.

Love, then, is the keystone of repentance. It is true that a man may love God very much, and yet commit sin. David loved God very much, and yet committed sin; but because David loved God very much he was enabled to become a penitent. But certainly, no man having fallen into sin, can ever be a penitent unless he do love God. That is alone the ground of his recovery.

S. Peter fell, he was lost, he forgot everything; he denied his Lord—on what grounds did he come to his senses and repent? Jesus, knowing what was in him, simply said, "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me?" and he answered, "Lord, Thou knowest that I love Thee." The Repentance was easy because of the love. S. Mary Magdalene—how dreadful a sinner she was! So much so that out of her went seven devils. On what ground became she, (of her sex,) the prime example of penitents? "He," (Jesus,) turned unto the woman and

said unto Simon, "Seest thou this woman? I entered into thine house, thou gavest me no water for my feet, but she hath washed my feet with her tears and wiped them with the hairs of her head. Thou gavest me no kiss; but this woman since the time I came in hath not ceased to kiss my feet. My head with oil thou didst not anoint, but this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment. Wherefore I say unto you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven her, for she loved much."

Her Repentance was true, genuine, real, accepted. What cared she about the Pharisees and the great men, among whom she, from her peculiar life, was well known? They had drawn attention to her on that very ground, but what mattered it all to her. Her luxurious life, her abandoned and desperate courses, the taunts of those who knew her, the gibes and mockery of her former companions; all were lost sight of. She never thought of them at all; she was only thinking of the love of Jesus. All gave way before that. She had great wickedness but she had a heart; she had many sins but she had love; once then the knowledge of sin rising up within her conscience; love did the rest. "Her sins were forgiven because she loved much."

Do you think that any man loving God could remain in sin? He might fall; but would he continue in his fall? There are a great many now in sin; a great many living in secret violation of God's Commandments; in some instances open violation

of them, *e.g.*, open violation of the fourth Commandment, never attending any worship of God: a great many more in secret violation, *e.g.*, of the eighth Commandment—fraud and dishonest dealing: and of the seventh Commandment, *e.g.*, sins of the flesh in impurity, lust, fornication, and adultery. Now would you tell me that these men could remain so, if they loved God? No, it is plain that their hearts are hardened against God; in reality they hate God. And the singular part of the matter is that these men—I mean those that live in secret sins—come to Church all the same, go through mock prayers, hear (as they are doing now) about Repentance; but never think of being moved by it. Why? Because their hearts are hardened. What a fearful state! If they had a grain of love in their hearts this could not be. They do not repent but go on still in their wickedness, and whether God will come to judgment or not, is all the same to them.

Suppose I am addressing a man of intellectual power, fond of reasoning: he answers me, when I put the question, "Are you really a penitent?" by pointing out how Repentance does certainly constitute a vital and essential condition of Salvation. He acknowledges it as a matter of argument: he joins in the services where it is asserted: he assents: he conforms: he comes to Church on penitential days, such as Ash-Wednesday: he passes in a decent manner through Lent, and comes to Good Friday with a tacit admission

that he, as well as everybody else, is a sinner. But is there anything in his heart ? Do tears ever flow down from his eyes ? Does his pulse throb with emotions to think of the price which was paid through the forty days of his Blessed Lord's fasting, His temptation, His agony, His cross, His death ? Not the least. It is a dry, intellectual, rationalistic affair. Have his sins really pulled him down to the dust ?—not in the least. Does he kneel before the cross in any real compunction ?—not in the least. Would you call that man a penitent ?

Or I enter into a wealthy trader's shop. All Lent he has been at work—as hard at work then as at any other time—making money. He observes his customers coming in and going out with extremely great satisfaction. He balances his ledger on Saturday night with extremely great self-laudation—but has he taken account of his sins ? On which side of the account are his debts with Almighty God ? Yes, he has had his faults—all men have—of course people must repent—without Repentance you cannot be saved. He knows all that. He has heard it from the pulpit often and often, but he does not see, as far as himself is concerned, that he is worse than others—indeed, there is so and so much worse than he is. By and by he will think of it ; time enough yet. Would you call that man a penitent ?

Or, I come across some fine gentleman of the world. He has his great establishment, as it is

called; carriages, and horses, and servants, and luxurious dinners every day, and purple and fine linen. He will acknowledge at the beginning of Lent that he has need of Repentance. Of course he has—with all the rest of the world he has—and he says the Collect of Ash-Wednesday and the Fifty-first Psalm. But now in reality let me ask him—Is there any sorrow for Sin? Sin to him is an abstract evil. But let him specify—has he done any thing to get rid of it? There his sins stand out before him ready to be counted—sins of his boyhood, of his youth, at school, at college, now even very lately, even yesterday. But then all this causes no grief. He goes on in his usual worldly course, not the least disturbed. He is as happy and as jovial in society as ever. He will indeed be most gentlemanly and affable—as now for instance in this Mission. He will talk to you about the sins of the poor, how necessary it is that something should be done for them. "This is no doubt a very depraved city, full of what is very wrong—and no doubt I have had my share in it when I was young. But you know, every young man "must sow his wild oats." I have done with all that now; I don't think you can tax me with any immorality just now. I certainly do remember things of which I am rather ashamed. I am very sorry. The clergy are very good to come and tell us about it. I am very sorry." Now that, my brethren, is the sort of language which these gentlemanly persons hold. They do not in the

least mean to throw contempt on religion, or to deny the truths of the great tenet of the gospel, that men must repent of their sins if they are to be saved: on the contrary they think that by a little courteous assent to what they cannot help assenting to, they are flinging away all the responsibility in which they stand before God for the sins of their youth. But, my dear brethren, I put it to you, or to any one such who may possibly be hearing me now,—Is that true Repentance? No. To leave off sin for any other cause than love of God is not Repentance. These men have left off sin, because sin has left off them—because in their advanced position in life, the world itself would not tolerate their sins. But they have no mind in their change, no heart in it, no soul in it. You see at once that it is all mere talk, theory, words; a technical phraseology of Religion, spurious, frivolous, meaningless.

Now apply the touchstone of truth to it and you will see why it is so. The intellectual reasoner, the thriving man of business, and the fashionable man of the world—why is it that in them there is not a grain of genuine Contrition? (and if not, their souls must be in a terrific state of danger.) Why is it that they have no genuine Repentance?—Because they have no love—no love of Jesus Christ; all that they do is to love themselves. Rationalistic infidelity, money-making covetousness, and luxurious worldliness harden the heart, deaden the feelings, obliterate the affections, and a man so living is as one in a mine

breathing poisonous air; he must die, he cannot live. He does not see Jesus Christ, he has no feeling that a Saviour came into the world and endured what Jesus Christ endured, for his sins. He is so wrapped up in self that there is no soft place in his heart to plead for the Love of Jesus; no tears of sorrow to think of the Passion of Jesus. The garden of Temptation and of Gethsemane; the Bloody Sweat; the agonizing cry; the bitterness of the Cross: all this which moves others moves not him. There he stands, talks, goes about the streets all Lent, all the Holy Week, even Good Friday, just the same as any other day. He does not hate sin, therefore he cannot love God. He cannot love God, therefore there can be no genuine or true Repentance.

What then, my dear brethren, I would earnestly beseech you to do, is this,—Try to love God. You say, "How can I love God if it is not in me." I reply, you can do a great deal towards it. Thus—Place before you a Crucifix, or picture of our Lord on the Cross. Kneel down on your knees in your own room by yourself. Detach yourself from all the world around you. Gaze on that picture. For what was all this? Do you believe it? For those sins which you very well know you have committed. What was the impelling power that made the great God and Saviour Jesus go through all this? Love. He looked out on this sinful world—you among the rest—and He said, "This is one of my lost souls." He had no interest for Himself in doing that; it

was for you. Do you believe it ? Go through in your imagination what this was. His degradation, sufferings, pain, mental, bodily: His scourging, His five wounds, His agony, His sorrow, "was ever such sorrow as that?" was ever such "love as that?"

But it was your sin that did it. Each nail of the Cross you joined in fixing there; each drop of blood pouring forth you joined in forcing from His sacred flesh. Search into the counsels of God ; ask yourself,—Why ? For what reason was it that such a stupendous mystery as this took place ? What must have been the love of Jesus for you ? Then pray. Ask of the Holy Spirit to soften your heart, to take it out of the hardness, dryness, covetousness, selfishness, sensuality, of this miserable world ; go on praying, till, like the importunate widow you get what you want—never rest till you do. Do not *talk* of Repentance. Do not talk of being a "*miserable sinner.*" Do not go on in the mockery of that Ash-Wednesday Collect about the "sins of them that are penitent," and about "new and contrite hearts," when you have no feeling whatever in your heart akin to it. Let me assure you it is all a fallacy—you must begin by Love. Throw yourself down on the ground; abandon yourself to the pure, simple, grief of Love. Say to Jesus—on your knees, the oil of your devotion running over His sacred Head, your tears running down over His sacred Feet, your hair abandoned in loose tresses to wipe them—say

to Jesus, "This I do because I love Thee." "Lord Thou knowest that I love Thee;" and then shall there be something like Repentance: that Repentance over which it has pleased God to say there shall be joy—joy in Himself—joy in Heaven—joy among the holy Angels. "There is joy in Heaven over one sinner that repenteth."

FOURTH DAY OF THE MISSION.

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 17, 1869.

Conversion.

S. Matthew, xiii. 15.

"THIS PEOPLE'S HEART IS WAXED GROSS, AND THEIR EARS ARE DULL OF HEARING, AND THEIR EYES THEY HAVE CLOSED, LEST AT ANY TIME THEY SHOULD SEE WITH THEIR EYES AND SHOULD UNDERSTAND WITH THEIR HEART, AND SHOULD BE CONVERTED AND I SHOULD HEAL THEM."

Sermon IV.

CONVERSION.

What is the difference between Repentance of which I spoke last evening, and Conversion of which I am to speak now ?

I tried to point out how it was that Repentance failed in so many cases because it was merely nominal. I tried to describe to you various orders of mind, and to show how from one reason or other, Repentance, though much talked of, does not succeed in its work of saving souls because it is unreal. Why is this ? I make an induction out of the many general reasons which I gave yesterday, to one which will be found to embrace them all, and of which I am now to speak—want of Conversion.

Now do not think, my brethren, that I am going to launch out into the extravagancies of certain sectarians, who attribute the movements of the soul in religion to violent internal impulses of the Holy Ghost, which, whether the will of man co-operates with them or not, leads them to, or deprives them of, salvation by force. Of a certainty, whatever we may say about that which is generally called Calvinism, there is a virtue or power of the Holy

Ghost which works in the mind of some and not of others, and one man is certainly different from another in the reception of that which God gives. Why it is we cannot tell, but so it is; and it is taught in the Parable of the "Sower and the Seed," wherein the different soils use the same seed in different degrees of fruitfulness. But however this may be, it is certain that the Holy Ghost must be the prime mover in every thing of religion. He is in baptism, the prime mover by regeneration. So, in after life, when lapses into sin occur, He must be the prime mover in some renewal or conversion. But still though He is the prime mover, He is not so against, but with the will of man, as it is precisely exemplified in the Parable of the Sower which I just mentioned; for the seed is given, but the soils produce the fruit. As you say in Regeneration (or the new birth of Baptism) it is the Holy Ghost that moves; so in post-baptismal sin, when the soul loses, more or less, the grace of that new birth, He is required again for renewal; for thus it is said (clearly distinguishing between the two) by S. Paul, when he joins the two operations of the Holy Ghost together as the source of the work of salvation, "we are saved by the washing of Regeneration," (which is clearly baptism,) "and the renewing of the Holy Ghost," which clearly refers to something subsequent, because there cannot be a renewal of that which has not existed before. It refers to a resuscitation, a revival, a fresh growth and re-springing

forth of that which has been decayed, or cut down by some accident; injured, but not entirely lost. This is what is called in other places Conversion. This is what I say then, that the reason why men do not come up to the grace of Repentance is this, that they have not the grace of Conversion.

But then it is asked, What is the meaning of Conversion? It begins with consciousness of sin—not consciousness of sin as a fact, but consciousness of sin in the heart, in the soul; consciousness of its guilt. A soul in post-baptismal sin must be renewed, or it is lost. Plunged into "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, or the pride of life," the soul all defiled and polluted by habitual disobedience to God's Law, the whole mind alienated from even the desire to please God, the understanding darkened, the will perverted, the knowledge of truth clouded over and blinded,—which is the case of ninety-nine men out of a hundred, in spite of their baptism,—the soul is evidently, remaining in this condition, lost. It must be re-verted, brought back,—or as the Scripture says, "converted." But the conversion depends primarily on a consciousness of the lost state. If a man is not aware of the position in which he stands, if he is not alive to or sensible of the guilt in which he is involved, how can he be converted. The conversion must be begun by a feeling of the need of that conversion. Sin is so pleasant to the natural or carnal mind; it falls in with all around us so easily, it is pursued and

enjoyed so readily, it meets us at every turning so continually, that to men living in the world sin becomes a matter of course. And so you see the whole world flowing on in a stream of sin, and of wickedness, and ungodliness; so rapid, so constant, so uninterrupted, that it seems as if sin ceased to be sin. At any rate its nature is so changed by the philosophy of the world, that when you come to argue with men about it you find that they are not aware of the state in which they live.

There is a frightful precipice. Thousands of feet down below, the waves of the sea dash against the rocks, and a man falling from that height must be crushed to atoms. But there is one calmly walking along the edge of that precipice without any sort of fear. We who stand by and look on perceive the danger, but the man himself does not. He is not conscious of any danger at all. On he walks as though on a plain road. He falls—he is killed. We rush with impetuous fear to see how this could have happened. It is soon accounted for—he was blind.

There is the sound of beautiful music in the spheres above. The harmony of Angels singing in the heavens: their harps and psalteries ringing through the air as they did at the Nativity of Jesus: and all are rivetted with breathless attention, joining in the tuneful choir. But there stands one there in the midst of all this joyful company, who moves not, stirs not, weeps not, rejoices not. You wonder. You need not wonder; he is deaf; the

very thing that the prophet Isaiah tells us, and our Lord gives us as the reason of teaching by Parables; foreshowing the darkness and deafness into which sin plunges the soul—"This people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed, lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and should understand with their hearts, and they should be converted, and I should heal them."

Hence then, I say, that consciousness of sin is the first preliminary in the conversion of a sinner. I may read to a man out of God's Word the Ten Commandments. I may dilate before him in the accuracy of the schoolmen on the divisions and subdivisions of sin; venial sin and mortal sin; of sins of the mind, of the tongue, and of the act. I may expatiate on the theory of right and wrong, justice, and injustice. I may preach with the eloquence of S. Paul, of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come; of justification, and faith; and of the necessity of the Atonement of Jesus. But what of all this? The man assents but he is not moved; he agrees but he does not change; he applauds but he remains just as he was. "A beautiful sermon," "a most eloquent preacher," "a learned disquisition," "an incontrovertible argument," "most true indeed!" "most convincing!" Yes. But the sins remain as they were. Why? Because there is all the while no consciousness that what has been said applies to him. This may arise from various

causes. First, it may arise from want of being taught. The heathen world had no consciousness of sin, because it had no knowledge of Christ. Its philosophers did indeed distinguish between right and wrong; and S. Paul says that their "consciences ought to have accused or excused them;" but that did not apply to the acuter and more delicate shades of sin which the Gospel of Jesus has taught us. It is this to which S. Paul alludes when he says, "I had not known sin but by the Law." But if there is no law, then no sin; and if no sin, then of course no need of conversion. But these being set aside as men altogether outside of the covenant of God, there still remains a second and large class of men who have a knowledge of sin, yet have no consciousness of its guilt. They have been taught and are aware that God has forbidden or commanded such and such things; they know and are aware that they have done, or not done these things; and yet there is no consciousness of sin. They will allow the fact, but not the guilt. They deny that to be sin, which Almighty God says is sin. They dispute, or argue against the authority which defines it. They deceive themselves by excuses and evasions so as to escape (in their own minds) from the consequences which it involves.

For instance, in the eighth Commandment, "Thou shalt not steal." I believe that many live in a continual breach of this commandment, not perhaps openly and violently, but secretly and by inference. They would not deliberately rob on the highway,

or feloniously break into a house; but they would not hesitate in many kinds of fraud, forgery, falsifying accounts, adulterating goods, and imposing on the weakness of others, by superior craft or cunning. All sorts of dishonest actions are continually being done, on the ground that it is the custom of trade, or justified by necessity. They are not perceived to be sin; they do not arrest the mind; he who is guilty of them is not conscious that he is breaking the eighth Commandment.

Or take the seventh Commandment. Acts of wickedness, in lust, in fornication and impurity, are continually being committed, but they are defended, or excused. The law of man is taken as a guide instead of the Law of God; and lives which are called sinful by the Holy Scriptures are tolerated in the society of the world; and so there is no consciousness in the mind of anything being wrong. Moral depravity of every kind is persisted in. A life, such as in the early Christians with their severe discipline would have necessitated instant excommunication from the Church, is indulged with a tacit permission and condonation even from those who call themselves respectable. The solemn words of S. Paul are utterly ignored, "The works of the flesh are manifest, which are these:—adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, drunkenness, revellings, and such like, of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the Kingdom of God." And so all these things make

no impression on the conscience. The world sanctions them, and the world is judge, not God.

Or, take the ninth Commandment. Some guilty of its violation in open acts of malignity, defamation, and public deceits and hypocrisies; witness the advertisements in newspapers, and plans for stock jobbing speculations. Others in inventions of malice against enemies, and a will which carries them into any assertion which comes uppermost to the mind at the moment. But beyond these what a number of persons addicted to paltry gossiping and talking of their neighbours' affairs, spreading evil reports, delighting in mischief, overthrowing the whole nature of that brotherly love which S. Paul describes as essential to the Christian character. "Charity thinketh no evil." Yet these men and women go about the streets, and seem utterly unconscious that all this is sin. They do it as a matter of ordinary life. Falsehoods, impostures, equivocations, nay even perjury itself, as in the courts of law, spread themselves out over the whole area of society; and the tongue goes forth, as S. James tells us, "as a fire, a world of iniquity. So is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature, and is set on fire of Hell."

Now the awful part of all this as it now stands before us is, not that these sins are committed, but that men go on in them either without perceiving, or without acknowledging that they are sins. This

is what S. Paul describes as being "dead in trespasses and sin." It is what he again describes as being "reprobate." It is not that a man needs to be told to "resist the devil and he will flee from him." Society does not seem to know that there is a devil; or as S. Bernard says, "you need not speak to a man hardened in heart about the devil as the agent of sin, for he becomes a devil to himself;" *i.e.*, sin has so absorbed him, so wound itself into his whole nature, that it has become part of himself. To talk of virtue, holiness, the possibility of goodness, and still more of the Grace of the Holy Spirit approaching to help such an one, would be as impossible and as absurd as to speak of the same things to a "horse or mule which have no understanding." They do not resist the Holy Ghost and so sin against Him—for they do not so much as know whether there be any Holy Ghost. They are not like the Prodigal, who when he came to himself arose and went to his Father; for they never do come to themselves. They have no self, *i.e.*, no conscience to come to. They are not like the Magdalene, who hearing of Jesus bathed His sacred Feet with her tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head; for they never see Jesus at all, nor hear of Him, nor care for Him. They are not like David, who when the Prophet came to him and said "Thou art the man," fell down at once before God in the conviction of his guilt; for they never hear the voice of the Prophets which now are continually

coming to them with the very same message. They hear, may be, in sermons that "Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners," but that they themselves are these sinners, it does not enter into their minds to think. "He came to save that which was lost," but they do not perceive that they themselves are among such "lost." They know not the meaning of such a phrase. He says "Come unto Me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest," but they are not conscious of being "heavy laden," neither do they appreciate any such "rest." Thus all religion on its very first outset and principle vanishes. How such a man can ultimately be saved, it is impossible to say. Every thing is within the range of God's power and God's mercy; but this is most clear both to reason and to faith, that unless somehow there is produced in such men a consciousness of sin, and thence a conversion, they cannot be saved.

Now, my brethren, the first thing I must press home to you is this. Have you consciousness of sin? Do you want to have it? There is no use in your coming to this Mission if you have it not, and persist in the idea that you do not need it. There is not probably any one here in this congregation so utterly depraved as to deny that there is such a thing as sin, or not to know of it. It is only the savage, or the wild man of the prairies that could be in such a case. But there may be some who might abstractedly and generally acknowledge such a thing

to be, but not see it in themselves. Or they might say generally, "Yes, I am a sinner;" "God have mercy upon me a sinner;" "I know I am a sinner," but, that is not the point. The point is, Are you conscious of *guilt* in sin? Are you conscious that by being thus a sinner, you will, if you die without repentance, be out of the reach of God's mercy? Does your sin press upon you, weigh you down, overwhelm you, make you utterly miserable and forlorn, and desolate and wretched? Do you say with David—"My sin is ever before me;" "My sins have taken such hold upon me, that I cannot look up?" Do you say with Jeremiah, "Oh, that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people?" Or do you say with S. Paul, conscious of the utter ruin in which you stand, "Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" Woe to that man who treats sin lightly; "that calls evil good, and good evil, that puts darkness for light, and light for darkness;" who glosses over sin, passes it by, drives the recollection of it out of his mind, tries to get rid of it: but a true blessing and a sure beginning of Repentance, when it takes possession of his mind and bears him down with its weight, and lies brooding on his conscience like a nightmare, filling him with dismay. That is the beginning of good.

You will say, How shall I gain this? You will gain it in the first instance, as every-

thing else in religion—through the operation of the Holy Ghost, Who is the great enlightener of the mind, and Whose office it is to move the heart of man, so that he may see the truth. But this may be followed up by various reflections and thoughts, upon the nature of our Being, and of God, and of Jesus Christ, tending towards the same end.

1. Reflect upon the guilt of Sin. You have broken some, many, perhaps all of God's Ten Commandments. But if it be only one, you are in consequence of that one,—as Adam and Eve were—cast out from the Presence of God, guilty before Him, unworthy to come near Him, an outcast, an alien from His Paradise. The Angel with his sword of judgment drives you from the gate, and will not let you enter more.

2. Reflect upon the offence of sin; the offence which you give to God. The All Pure and Holy Being Who sits between the Cherubim, surrounded in His Majesty by the thrones, and dominions, and principalities, and powers, cannot tolerate you if you remain obstinate in sin. As an unclean animal, or some foul insect or creeping thing is looked upon by us with a shudder and antipathy, and we turn from it in loathing, so it must be when Almighty God looks upon a man wilfully remaining in sin. You remember the conversation with S. Peter, when in the infirmity of the flesh the Apostle said, "Lord this shall not happen unto Thee," Jesus replied,

"Get thee hence, Satan: thou art an offence unto me;" even so every human being is by sin an offence unto God. He is perverting, grieving, standing in the way of the All Pureness and Perfection of the Divine nature. The two natures of sinful man and the pure God cannot look upon each other.

3. Reflect again upon the ingratitude which the sins of man display towards the great love and mercy which God has shown to us. What has God not done for us? Has any kindness, forbearance, or long-suffering been refused? Have any means of returning to Him, of appeasing His Wrath, of making satisfaction to Him been spared? None. Our bodies: How beautifully they are constructed, for happiness and usefulness; but we turn the very means and instruments which God meant for good into evil and sin. Our minds: Stored with manifold powers of intellect and knowledge we turn them into means of blasphemy, infidelity, and searching after, and cultivating the pleasures of sensual indulgence. Our souls: Lost in the original nature of Adam, saved in the waters of baptism—we throw them away again in reckless following of Satan against God. And yet even so: He comes again, does not leave us, lives among us in the Person of the Blessed Son, teaches us, dies for us on the Cross, founds a Church for us in whose membership by His Precious Blood-Shedding we still may be saved; and by His Sacraments surrounding us we may plead with never resting intercession. And yet, still we sin—still go

against Him, still love the flesh and the world, and our own will better than His.

4. Reflect upon the folly of sin. Let us allow that there are pleasures attending upon sin. If there were not, if sin had nothing else but pain and sorrow, of course it would have no attractions for us; but Satan so contrives it, and adapts it to our nature, that it does certainly convey a pleasure. So we observe in our Blessed Lord's temptation: "Command that these stones may be made bread." It would be a pleasure to a hungry fasting man to eat bread. And so with the rest. All gratification of lust of any kind is a pleasure. Drunkenness, or the drowning of the senses in excitement, is pleasure. Ambition—to rule over others in power and dominion is pleasure. Vanity—to be well spoken of and praised and flattered is pleasure. And so on. But then, for how long? and with what end? and in what comparison with the fruits that come after? What of the things which are seen being temporal, while certain things which result out of them are eternal? Now it is not wise to play with Eternity. It is not wise to let go the greater to snatch at the lesser. It is not wise to forego the substance contenting yourself with the shadow. And yet this is what a man does, when for the pleasures of sin, for a season, he is contented to plunge his soul into hell-fire for eternity. Let a man get this last truth well into his mind, and it will tend to make him think. Do not run away

from the fact, or hide it, or drown the conscience, or become hardened in heart. But let a conscientious conviction of the truth guide you; a firm embracing of the faith guard you. There is such a thing as a "conscience seared with a hot iron." That may be yours, if you go on habitually as you are doing now; drowning, qnenching, deceiving, trifling with the movements of the Holy Spirit, which are meant to lead you to Repentance.

Come then now; come in this Mission; come at once. Resist not any longer. Let the tears flow. Let the cries burst forth. Let the confession be made. Let the heart swell out into the compunction, and the contrition, and the sorrow of a true penitent; and let the terrors of an offended God dwell in your heart, tempered by the assurance of His readiness to forgive and to put away sin, and to restore to the arms of His mercy, every single soul, however grievously he may have erred, provided only he turn to Him and say, "Jesu, Mercy."

FIFTH DAY OF THE MISSION.

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 18, 1869.

Self-Examination.

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2 *Corinthians* xiii. 5.

"EXAMINE YOURSELVES WHETHER YE BE IN THE FAITH. PROVE YOUR OWN SELVES."

Sermon V.

SELF-EXAMINATION.

I have now so far advanced as to suppose the sinful man, (and which of us, my brethren, is not that sinful man,) to be first smitten with a consciousness of sin; then to be subdued into contrition for sin—real contrition and sorrow so as to be cast down and troubled; as David says, "Why art thou cast down O my soul, and why art thou disquieted within me?" and then to be thus enabled to turn to God in true Repentance.

All these movements of the conscience and of the soul must be ascertained, felt, and realized before we can proceed any further in our work of salvation. Let me repeat—If any one of you, my brethren, seeking Repentance, have no consciousness that you are a sinner; if it be only a word with you, an idea, a phrase of religion, a thing that you are obliged to adopt for a part of your profession, without really intending anything by it—or, if having a knowledge of right and wrong, having a knowledge of what sin is, you perceive that you have as a matter of fact committed sin, and yet you care not about it; it is a matter of indifference to you; you

go about the streets just as happy and contented as though you were the most virtuous and holy of men. Then in either of these cases you will not be a fit man to go on with me in my Sermon to-day. You are not the man that I have to deal with; and I think I may also say, you are not the man that Almighty God can at this moment look down upon from Heaven with any feeling but that of indignation.

I would rather presume, as I think in charity I safely may, that every soul here is both conscious of many sins, and in thinking of them, remembering them at this present moment, is of a contrite spirit. This being granted, it becomes us to consider what is the next stage in the progress of getting back to God. You are troubled, you are vexed at heart, disconcerted, sorrowful. You say, "Save me, O God, for the waters are come in even unto my soul. I sink in deep mire where there is no standing, I am come into deep waters where the floods overflow me." But this feeling is vague, shadowy, stretched over a dim outline. You cannot tell for certain why your soul is thus downcast and oppressed. It is for sin,—somehow for sin. But what sin or sins? How many, and how deep; how they are aggravated, and how they arose, and whither they tended, or are tending at this present moment, you cannot say.

It is here that the next stage in progress of Repentance arises—Self-Examination. "Examine

yourselves whether you are in the faith," whether you are in holiness. "Prove your own selves;" or as S. Paul says in another place in preparation for the Blessed Sacrament, "Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that Bread and drink of that Cup."

"Self-Examination is the most difficult duty that a man has to perform in his religion. Why? Because it is so very difficult to avoid Self-Deception. How do men in general get through this duty? "Have I broken any of God's Commandments? Have I forgotten anything that I ought to have done? Have I done anything that I ought not to have done? Well, it was very wrong, I am sorry for it, I will do better next time." Some such hasty thought or word is all that passes through the mind. They do not get down into the depths of their sin; they do not perhaps wish to do so. It would be very disagreeable to do so. They go through a form, but they have no reality. They recognise a duty which they perform in the letter, but the spirit is wanting. What then ought Self-Examination to be? It must be, as the very name or word imports sincere, true, just, and complete, otherwise it had better be let alone. The word is taken from the Latin, *Examen*, and signifies the needle or index which points to the turning of the scale. On one side of the scale is God's Word, Justice, Righteousness, Sanctity; on the other side is yourself and your sins. Weigh yourself in this

scale. To which side will the index point. As in the case of that wicked king Belshazzar, in the profligate abuse of the power with which God had invested him, the handwriting on the wall pronounced judgment, "*Mene mene tekel upharsin*," "Thou art weighed in the balance, and found wanting;" so with us. There must be no false weights, no deception, no untruthfulness. It must be sincere. To this end I will give you three subsidiary points which will mark it.

1. You must have a right criterion by which to judge. 2. Your examination must be definite and special. 3. It must be continual.

First, as to the criterion—*i.e.*, the Rule in reference to which the examination is to be made. It must be this,—The Will or Law of God. Now imagine yourself and your sins on one side of the scale, and the Will of God on the other. Which way does the index point? You very likely will substitute the will of man; you will take man's code of justice, man's righteousness, instead of the will of God: in which case the judgment which you will make of yourself will be of course utterly false, and your examination valueless. *E.g.*, Religious worship. General religious profession would, in the judgment of the world consist of a decent attendance in God's House once a week, at Matins on a Sunday which is all you do. The world would not take into consideration Sacramental worship. But the Church's judgment assuredly would. Therefore in your self-examination

if you should judge yourself by the world you would pronounce yourself a religious man, which would not be true. And if you went on and said according to the general opinion and practice of the world, "Am I in coming to Church on a Sunday, and that only—or perhaps only on a Sunday morning—am I doing all that is necessary for salvation?" you would come to the conclusion: "Yes, I am." But if you were to ask the question according to the Church, (and the Church is the Voice of God,) and hearing the Church speak thus: "There are two sacraments necessary to salvation, Baptism and the Supper of the Lord," you would be obliged to answer: No, I am not doing all that is necessary for salvation.

Or again—If you were to examine yourself as to the tithes and offerings which you make to the Church for her support, for her poor, for the maintenance of her services; for her priests; and you went to men like yourself for a criterion of your duty, you would obtain a very different answer from that which God in His Holy Scriptures would give you. The world would demand very little of you, and your conscience would be satisfied probably with the payment of a hundredth part of your income, and if you should by accident be giving a little more, great would be the complacency and satisfaction with which you would look upon yourself. But if you should examine yourself by the word of God, you would find that a *tenth* part of your income was demanded for Him, and your conscience would not be let alone, you

would get no peace of mind, you would be restless and unhappy, because you would find that you were not acting up to the requirements of Holy Scripture, and of the Church. Your self-examination in that case going on the world's side, would be valueless: and though you might go through any amount of formality of worship, and present yourself with magnificent ostentation, as a conspicuous observer of what was due; honour to whom honour, tribute to whom tribute, custom to whom custom—still from the false estimate of your duty, introduced by the world, you would be losing sight of the real truth, which was behind. Your self-examination, from want of a proper criterion by which to judge, would be valueless.

Nay, further than that, self-examination might turn out a sin. What! you will say: a sin! When I am trying to find out what my sins are, can that itself be a sin? Yes, in this very respect of a wrong criterion. Pride and self-sufficiency; by putting out of sight what ought to be seen, through comparing what our sins are in reference to men and not to God, might be the result. It was just what the Pharisee did. He examined himself, and he said, "I have done this—I have not done that. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess. I am not like that Publican. I am not as other men are. They are very bad. I am better than they." The Pharisee was not justified in that self-examination.

Neither will you be if that be all you have to say. It will end in the sin of Pride.

Saul went down to battle, but did not as God commanded him to do,—destroy the Amalekites. When, by the help of the prophet, he came to examine himself, instead of acknowledging his error which was clear as the sun at noon-day; he set about excusing himself. So will your self-examination be if when you acknowledge a fact, you begin to excuse, or explain away that fact. Such self-examination will end in the sin of Hypocrisy.

S. Paul appeared before Agrippa, and he "reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come." No doubt Agrippa that night, after the sermon, went home and examined himself, for he said, "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian." But what was the result of this. Nothing. He did not become a Christian. So if in your self-examination you find the wrongs, and know from conscience to what those wrongs ought to lead, and you do not pursue that to which they ought to lead, better have left your self-examination alone. It will have only proved a snare to you. Hardness of heart, or perhaps even sin against the Holy Ghost might be the result.

No, my brethren, you must be very honest, truthful, very unflinching in carrying out the issue, as well as entering on the beginning of your self-examination.

The same truth applies to all the moral virtues

in contradiction to the deadly sins. The measurement must be by God's law and not man's.

Anger. Men say, "Thou shalt not kill." Jesus Christ says, "Whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment, and whosoever shall say Raca, shall be in danger of the Council, and whosoever shall say Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire."

Revenge. Men say, "An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth." Jesus Christ says, "Resist not evil; but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also."

Purity. Men say, "Thou shalt not commit adultery." Jesus Christ says, "Whosoever looketh upon a woman to lust after her, hath already committed adultery with her in his heart." Thus, it is by this higher standard that, as a Christian, you are to judge yourself—and not by the lower: Jesus Christ is the standard—there is no other. And here is the precept by which you are to gain it. "Be ye perfect even as your Father which is in Heaven is perfect." And here is the Apostles rule by which you are to measure your attainments in striving to attain it—"the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ."

Second—The next point to which you must attend, is this:—Your examination must be definite. Many men have a general, discursive kind of examination—travel over large periods of years, skim slightly over the surface of vast sins—long habitual sins, by

generalizing them. Thus, "I have been a great sinner. When I come to look over myself, I find indeed that I ought to be better than I am. I feel indeed that I am a proud man, or slothful, or passionate, or an impure man. I do not come up to the requirements of the Gospel, I see I do not. My life is very imperfect."

But you must do more than this. This is very wide of the mark: It is hiding oneself under a cloud of generalities: It is like a thief escaping from his pursuers by the help of a fog. A great number of circumstances have to be added—details, time, place, person, motive.

As to time: How many times have you given way to those sins of which you complain and accuse yourself? Was your sin an accident, or was it wilful? Was it with others, or by yourself? Was it once done, or did it become a habit? Did it go beyond a habit, and become a presumption, so that it "got the dominion over you?" Did you struggle against it, or did you yield without a struggle? As to place: Was the sin or the habit of sin indulged anywhere, in the street, in public society, in your own room; or in a church or holy place? It will be greatly aggravated or diminished according to the answer. As to person: Are you who have committed these sins an ignorant man? Did you know no better? Or are you an educated man? Have you sinned with knowledge or against knowledge? Have you received graces and blessings from your religion, such as frequenting the Blessed Sacrament, or are

you totally without means of grace? Do you live in a parish where little is said or done to induce you to come unto Christ: or do you live where the church bell tolls daily for your prayers, and the Sacramental Ordinances are brought home daily to your door without money and without price? Are you a young man or an old? Are you a layman or a priest? Have you undertaken great responsibilities wilfully, or have great responsibilities been thrust upon you against your will? In all these points arise immense aggravations or diminutions of sin: for thus the Apostle says, "Thou, therefore, that teachest another, teachest thou not thyself?" Thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal? Thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery? Thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege?"

And lastly as to motive: And this appertains even to good or, apparently good, actions. You are very great perhaps in the world's estimation or in your own estimation. You have given much alms to the poor, but why? From the love of Christ or the custom of men? You have contributed to build churches or maintain schools. Why? Was it that your name might appear in a Subscription List, to gain influence, or obtain a political vote? You go to Church on Sunday and appear in a seat with tolerable regularity on great occasions. Why? From a really sincere desire to worship God and hear the Church, or from a desire

not to deviate from the respectability which the world attaches to such a habit? Thus, the motives of actions honestly sifted end too often in disappointment to him who tries himself by the touchstone of a strict self-examination. Something that you did appeared to originate well: It appeared to be conducted well: You pursued it with impetuosity: You accomplished it with zeal: You looked upon it when completed with complacency: but when in the cooler moments of self-reflection you took the good deed to pieces, lo, it crumbled as it were a rope of sand and fell to nothing; yes, perhaps worse than nothing—a very sin. "Who can tell how oft he offendeth. O, cleanse Thou me from my secret faults."

A third rule for self-examination is, that it must be continual, as a daily habit. An examination of oneself occasionally or accidentally, under the pressure of a great excitement; as now for instance, in this Mission, and then left off; this will not do very much good, simply because new subjects for examination are daily occurring.

Some men, I really think, go through their whole life without ever asking themselves what they are; nay, even die in this ignorance—go out of the world into the very presence of God without a thought of the state of their souls. Nay, I should say that if a man through life has not been used to look into himself continually, constantly, I should say, daily, he would have a very poor chance of doing it effectually in the moments of pain and

suffering such as death generally brings with it. Consider what we *are*—consider what we *ought* to be. Consider what goes on every day in the lives of most of us. The great multitude of silly, if not sinful, words; the great portion of time spent in vanity, the omissions of duty, the coldness of prayer, indifference to holy things, uncertainty of purpose; our infinite deceptions if not hypocrisy, of speech, of action, of manner; our want of charity in imputing motives; thinking evil; complacency in good actions, excuses for bad; the indescribable passages from virtues into vices; our abuse of God's gifts; our little greedinesses in eating; our too great fondness and pleasure even in lawful love; our aptness to things sensual, deadness to things spiritual: all this—(I might go on for an hour in this way)—all this, and all such shortcomings, daily occurring in the very best of us, must make our self-examination (if it is to be useful as a corrective) no less than every day.

Contrition has done its work in your heart (this I am assuming). It has stirred up a discomfort and a misgiving about your sins. Then examine what those sins are in detail. You cannot do this in a moment, it is a difficult duty; it requires practice, and that practice must be daily. You have to make up, may be, for a long life of sin; you cannot, any more than a ship at sea, make up your leeway in a moment: it will take you days, and each day, even as you work, will keep adding on its fresh burdens. It was taught, even, in the schools of a heathen philosopher—"Let

not sleep seize upon the organs of your senses before you have three times recalled the conversations and the incidents of the day." How much more for a Christian when to the reason of the heathen, he adds the arguments of a day of judgment, which by faith he is assured is hourly impending, and in which, for every thought, every word, every deed in his life, he will have to give account.

Remember David, he fell away from God. Sin took possession of him, and for a long period he lived on in darkness. Why was that? He never examined himself; he never called back his memory or his mind to what he had done or what he was doing, but, in a blind infatuation, recklessly indulged the passion with which he was enthralled. It is clear that if he had examined himself he would not have fallen; because, directly that God sent the prophet Nathan, and probed him by the story of the ewe lamb, applying it by the well known words, "Thou art the man," he was saved. If he had done for himself what Nathan did for him, the sin would not have been committed. And S. Peter, in his pitiable fall—the loving, zealous, impetuous Peter, the Rock—why did he not examine himself on that fatal night. Jesus had warned him —"Before the cock crow twice thou shalt deny Me thrice." Why did he not go aside and think? No; on he went in his self-confidence, took no account of himself, asked no questions of himself; on he went. It is clear that if he had examined himself, he would not have fallen; because, when Jesus, in His

long-suffering forbearance, came and did the work of examination for him, he was immediately brought back: "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou Me?" Three times He said this, and the answer was: "Lord, Thou knowest that I love Thee." It is clear, that, if he had asked these questions of himself, he would not have fallen.

There is a smooth velvet lawn in your garden, beautifully kept, carefully rolled, not a blade of grass displaced—soft, gentle, unruffled to the eye. And so it continues many days, while the sun is warm and the weather dry; but of a sudden, the rain descends. Forthwith, out of it spring a thousand worms and filthy creeping things, which were all the while hidden beneath its surface, and your velvet lawn is for a moment marred and spoiled. Just so is your heart; apparently smooth, unruffled, undisturbed, without a defect. But self-examination descends into it, as the rain, to refresh and do it good; and then a thousand miserable sins (like creeping worms) spring up and make themselves visible, and you are astonished at the foulness which lay beneath so fair an exterior. Or, as ulcers and sores in the human frame. They are foul things to look upon, but the skilful Physician knows that they are better there on the external surface than hidden beneath; he can deal with them when they are visible. They mortify and bring death when concealed within and out of sight. Just so self-examination. It brings the sores and ulcers of

sin to the surface, and you can deal with them. Better so, although it may be disagreeable and foul for the time, than that the soul should be perishing within, laden with sins of which you knew not, or knowing, could not reach.

Surely, then, it is worth while to take some trouble in this matter. It is worth while to be put to some little inconvenience *now* in order to be saved for ever. What sort of tradesman or banker would he be that left all his affairs in confusion, and made no examination of his accounts until he came to die. So with you. Everything about you is in disorder and confusion, and would you desire to come to God in that state? "He that in life forgets God, in death forgets himself." *

Begin, therefore, at once. Delay not till to-morrow. Do it to-night. "God, Who has promised indulgence to thy repentance, has not promised a to-morrow to thy delay." †

Therefore, to-night, "Commune with your own heart, and in your chamber, and be still;" "Meditate in the night-watches." When all the world is silent and your soul stands, even as your body will, naked before the Judge of all the earth, say unto God—"Open mine eyes, O Lord, that I may see the wondrous things of Thy Law. Examine me and prove me. Try out my reins and my heart. Look well if there be any way of wickedness in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."

* Cæsarius. † S. Augustine.

SIXTH DAY OF THE MISSION.

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 19, 1869.

Confession.

S. James v. 16.

"CONFESS YOUR FAULTS ONE TO ANOTHER, AND PRAY ONE FOR ANOTHER THAT YE MAY BE HEALED."

Sermon VI.

CONFESSION.

I PRESUME, my brethren, that you have done, or at least, I may venture to hope that some have done, what I asked them to do yesterday; *i.e.*, they have examined themselves, they have ascertained the state of their souls between themselves and God. What has been the process? They have first become conscious of sin, then they have felt a soft and gentle sorrow pouring over them, which the Church calls "contrition;" Then, in the midst of an indefinite burden, they have set to work (with God's Holy Spirit helping them) to examine the reason of that burden. They have compared themselves in their lives—in their words, thoughts, actions, their motives (even of good) with the standard of God's Word—and have seen too well what need they had of that sorrow of heart which God, in His Mercy, has sent them.

The question now arises—What are we next to do—what is the next stage, in the course of the repentance, which we seek.

In the case of wrongs done between man and man, what is the reparation demanded? Suppose

e.g., yourself,—you have received a wrong from some one who ought to have known better; what do you expect of him to do in reparation for it? Are you content to be told that the man who has done you wrong is very penitent; that he is secretly, and within himself, full of sorrow about it. Are you content with that? By no means. You say, "Yes, but he must come and tell me so. It is but a just consequence of his sorrow for having done me wrong that he should come and acknowledge it." And you are by no means satisfied until he does so come and acknowledge it.

Just so it is between the sinner and Almighty God. We may reasonably imagine, from the feeling that I have thus described in ourselves, that Almighty God will look, as we do, for something more than a mere emotion of the mind. Contrition, sorrow, penitential grief, compunction, remorse, or any other name by which you may describe the movement of the soul in perceived sin, will not be enough. It is all of course most essential, and without it nothing ulterior can possibly be done. But what hinders you from going to God and saying that you have this feeling; what hinders you from telling Him the reason you have it; what hinders you from saying out and aloud that it is those sins which, by your self-examination, you have now been able to detect and bring out of their hiding-place. If you expect that one who has sinned against you shall come and tell you so, and you are not satisfied

until he does—then, in parallel line, you may be quite sure that God will not be satisfied with you until you do the same to Him. This constitutes the doctrine of Confession. It is the next stage in the progress of repentance after self-examination.

How true this principle is, you will find by reference to God's people and God's Saints in every age.

And first—nationally. Nations—whole generations of people very often become saturated and impregnated with sin—as the Jews did. And then a national confession is made. Nehemiah in the return of his people from captivity, (Nehem. i. 6,) mourns, fasts, prays, and then, as a part of his mourning, he says, "Let Thine ear now be attentive and Thine eyes open, that Thou mayest hear the prayers of Thy servant, which I pray before Thee, day and night, for the children of Israel Thy servants; and confess the sins of the children of Israel which we have sinned against Thee—both I and my father's house have sinned." And this, no doubt, you will easily remember, continually happens to ourselves as a people. In one year there was a great famine in Ireland. In another, not long ago, a great pestilence (the cholera). In another, a fearful outbreak in India, in which our people and soldiers perished in most fearful massacres. On all those occasions, rightly acknowledging the principle of Nehemiah, we made a day of fasting and humiliation, and publicly "confessed our sins."

Now what is true of nations is equally true of individuals; and thus we find it as a principle expressly laid down in the Law of God—as in Leviticus v. 5, after describing certain sins—it is said, "And it shall be when he shall be guilty in one of these things that he shall confess that he hath sinned in that thing." And in Numb. v. 6, "Speak unto the children of Israel, when a man or woman shall commit any sin that men commit, to do a trespass against the Lord, and that person be guilty—then they shall confess the sin which they have done." And here you will observe that it is not as the world commonly interprets the duty of confession—a mere general acknowledgment of wrong, abstract expressions of the sins of our common nature, but a specification,—"they shall confess *the* sin which they have done"—they shall examine, and specify, and say exactly in what particulars they have transgressed.

And so in the opening of the Christian dispensation as following the Jewish, confession is the keystone of the movement. S. John Baptist preached—he preached of sins—he called upon the people to repent of their sins—but *confession* of those sins followed, as a matter of course. "They were baptized of him in Jordan confessing their sins."

We easily pass on from this to the history of great penitents. The same spirit runs through them all, a conviction of sin followed up by a free and open and entire acknowledgment of it. You will of course

expect me to instance the case of David. For long, indeed, there was no consciousness of sin; but dark and hard stood the king's heart against all knowledge of wrong. Guilty of adultery, of treachery, and of murder, he yet seemed not to perceive it, until he was, at length, roused from his torpor by the voice of the Prophet, "Thou art the man." Then, with contrition and conviction of guilt, came immediately his confession. And David said, "I have sinned against the Lord." In the same manner the Prodigal: his heart worn down with sorrow and dismay, he says: "I will arise and go to my Father"—but not only so—"and I will say unto Him" —*i.e.*, I will make my confession—"Father, I have sinned against Heaven and before Thee, and am no more worthy to be called Thy son."

The question next arises, to whom is this confession to be made, and in what manner?

First, and directly, to Almighty God; for since the end of confession as a part of repentance is to obtain forgiveness, to Him must the confession be made, Who has the power of that forgiveness. And to Whom does it appertain to forgive sins, but God alone. Thus, generally, and in every form of Service that the Church puts into the mouths of her people, confession, as a rule, forms a leading point. In Matins and Evensong daily we begin—"Dearly beloved brethren, the Scripture moveth us in sundry places to acknowledge and confess our manifold sins and wickedness." Then follows the general confession.

And so in the Communion Office. Before we presume to approach the Altar of the Blessed Sacrament, the communicants are told to "make their humble confession to Almighty God, meekly kneeling on their knees." My brethren, we could hardly conceive it possible to meet together in God's House, or to pray to Him in our families, or to kneel down night or morning by our bed-side, or in our Oratory—without first confessing our sins. It makes essentially a primary feature in our devotions everywhere. If we ask anything of God, how unworthy are we to ask by reason of our sins. If we ask forgiveness, on what ground, unless the sins for which we want forgiveness are acknowledged. What horrible pride, emptiness, ignorance of himself, and self-sufficiency, ignorance of God, would there be in a man's heart if he were to pray, without first confessing. This then is universal, not denied, I believe by any Christian; Catholic, Protestant or sectarian. It is as much a part of his practice, as the doctrine of the Atonement would be part of his Faith.

So far then as we have gone there is no difficulty. It is perfectly clear—1st., that as a general duty in the congregation we are to confess our sins to God; and 2ndly, as a private duty, after a faithful self-examination we are to enumerate and specify, and make out of that specification a faithful confession in every particular to God.

Of these two points there can be no question.

But to these two are added a third; *i.e.*, whether confession of sins to a private person as to a priest, sometimes called auricular confession, whether that also is a necessary part of a Christian man's duty.

Perhaps I shall best unravel this difficulty by setting it before you as a matter of history.

There is no question but that in the earlier ages of the Church, as here shown us in S. James, "Confess your faults one to another," the first Christians did make confession one to another. It is not said to a priest; but if it be said "one to another," who would be the person most likely to be chosen but the bishop or priest, the authorised pastor of the flock?

This no doubt was the case founded on the Jewish law of which I have spoken; and especially in the law of cleansing the leper directed by our Blessed Lord Himself, "Go, show thyself to the priest." As times grew on, and from the admission of great numbers of the Gentiles, it was unavoidable that many impurities should be found in the Church, the custom arose of public Penance. Those who fell into any grievous sin after baptism, such as idolatry, blasphemy, theft, murder, adultery, and such like scandalous sins, were at once publicly excommunicated. Their sins being known, any possibility of returning to the Church while the scandal lasted was denied them, unless they would submit to public penance, and this public penance could only be resorted to once in a man's life. If he fell a second

time into such grievous sin, he never, on any condition whatever could be brought into the Church again. He was an outcast for life. So that there were two ways by which a sinner could obtain remission of sins, Baptism and Penance; and from the fact of this Penance being only once, as Baptism was only once, they were placed together as the two Sacraments for Remission of Sins. Original, or Birth Sin could only be remitted by Baptism; Post Baptismal Sin by Penance. For both, long preparations were required; and for the latter, public demonstration of sorrow, of humiliation, many outward acts of mourning, and the prayers and intercessions of the congregation in whose presence the act of Penance took place. Moreover, to facilitate this, and bring it into order, there was a public officer of the Church appointed, called a Penitentiary. Those who had fallen into grievous sins, either notoriously or secretly—sins by which their conscience was aggrieved, whether known to man or not, dared not approach the Altar of the Blessed Eucharist in such a state (it would have been, as S. Paul had warned, eating and drinking their damnation,) therefore they first confessed their state to the private priest who was over them in the congregation; and then the priest advising with them referred them to the Penitentiary, in order that by an appointed penance, their souls might be saved.

Towards the close of the fourth century, Nectarius, Patriarch of Constantinople, owing to some abuses

which occurred in this discipline, abolished the office of the Penitentiary, and it was never completely restored. From that time public discipline was greatly relaxed, and though many attempts to bring it back were made both in the Greek and in the Western Church, the custom gradually faded away. Excommunications of sinners did take place, but they were mixed up with civil punishments. The spiritual idea of making public satisfaction to the Church, as for sin against God, lost its hold of the people, and it ceased. It is this to which we allude in the Commination Service, as a "godly discipline,"—that of casting out of the Church obstinate and notorious sinners;—the restoration of which, for the purity of the Church as a Christian body, we say "is much to be wished."

But relief, satisfaction, and spiritual comfort were still desired by those whose consciences were burdened with sin. Christians found in the Holy Scriptures, both the Old Testament and New, that there was something sacred, something of the love of Christ, something of the paternal, as well as the pastoral and sacerdotal character in the bishops and priests who ruled over their several flocks. They recognised also the power of the keys in the commission given to the Apostles and their successors, "Whosesoever sins ye remit they are remitted, and whosoever sins ye retain they are retained;" it was natural therefore that while that part of the exercise of the keys, *viz.*, the public penance, was held in abeyance, still

the private confession to the priest, and private absolution should be retained. Such was the case: and throughout Christendom there grew up in the Church a private confession of sins to the priest as a part of Church discipline, for the comfort and guiding of overburdened consciences. And this custom has continued universally up to the present day.

Now some one here might perhaps be asking me in his secret mind, "What do you think of this? Do you recommend or advise private confession?" Let me explain to you something first, and then I will answer the question. First then let us look to the exhortation given to the people in preparation for Holy Communion, that which is read to you previous to celebration. The Church warns you to self-examination. She warns you lest you come thoughtlessly or unprepared. She warns you lest you come unrepentingly from the commission of any great sin; and she says; if in the state of your soul—which state no one can look into but yourself and God—if in the examination which you have made of yourself, you are perfectly comforted and assured in your repentance; if you are decided and clear that you seek Jesus Christ and His Blessed Sacrament of the Altar, with a conscience perfectly undisturbed; if you are quite clear that your peace is made with God, that He looks upon you as one reconciled to Him in the Blood of Jesus Christ; then there is nothing further for you to do; for neither a priest nor any human being can do more than lead you to, or

pray for you that you may have such assurance of reconciliation, such sign and token of the forgiveness of the sins which you assert that you have. Very well; in this state go on, and God speed you. Happy are you, happy is any one to be in such a case.

But—ah this but—does any man think he can safely say that? The most righteous, the strictest, holiest, best intentioned man falls into some kind of sin every day of his life. He can hardly be sure that beyond himself and his own subjective feeling these sins need no confession. It would be a presumption of which I should be sorry to know that any whom I cared for should be guilty. If I had a dear friend laid up in some mortal sickness, and in the midst of all his pain and suffering he were to refuse to apply to a skilful physician, dwelling very near at hand, who would be sure to restore him to health; but instead of doing so, he would insist (as it is said) in doctoring himself, I should be very sorry, because I should know what would come of it. He would have a perfect right to be his own physician if he pleased, and to kill himself, if he pleased, by doing so; but kill himself, I should be perfectly sure he would. Or if some poor woman, with internal ailments, were to send for a surgeon, and when he came, should refuse to tell him, out of shame, or false modesty, or fear, what was the matter; again, I should know what would come of it. The poor woman (though help were immediately within reach) would surely die. So of you, dear brethren, ac-

knowledging your sins, acknowledging that confession is needed, acknowledging that God has appointed his physician for the very purpose of relieving you in that confession; and, nevertheless, you still continuing to say—"I can confess my sins to myself, I have no need of any one else to help me."—I should be very sorry. You might get through your soul's sickness by a lucky chance, but the probability is you would not. At any rate, let me ask you which side would be safest in a case of such doubt?

But let alone these and such others as think, from their own spiritual ability, they need no confession. Let alone these. What of those many multitudes—how many thousands—millions—who wander about inside, outside the fold, and are not so assured. How many of you, my dear brethren, never come to the Holy Communion. Even at Easter you do not come. And why? Because faithfully examining your soul's estate, you are uncertain, you doubt, you have misgivings, you reckon up such a number of sins in your life—that you are afraid to come with such a burden on your soul. Your faith; you are not quite sure whether it is sound. Your moral life; you know that it is altogether, and has been a great many years altogether wrong. You desire to come then—but you dare not. Now hear the words of the Church which speaks to you as a gentle, loving mother—not a severe and exacting tyrant with compulsion—but as a mother with persuasion; "And because it is requisite, that no man should come to

the holy Communion, but with a full trust in God's mercy, and with a quiet conscience; therefore, if there be any of you who, by this means, cannot quiet his own conscience herein, but requireth further comfort or counsel, let him come to me, or to some other discreet and learned Minister of God's Word, and open his grief; that by the ministry of God's holy Word he may receive the benefit of absolution, together with ghostly counsel and advice, to the quieting of his conscience, and avoiding of all scruple and doubtfulness." The meaning of which is simply this—You are such a poor, miserable, misguided, sinful man—you are perhaps unlearned—you do not perhaps know your own self—you perhaps do not know how even to examine yourself—and even when you have examined yourself, you cannot come to a definite conclusion, whether you are justified in approaching the altar for the reception of your Blessed Lord's Body and Blood or not; you cannot tell whether such an act (being unprepared, and your sins not for certain in your own mind forgiven)—would not, as S. Paul says of it, "increase your damnation." You have a *thought* to go to the altar—you have a longing *wish* to go, but you dare not—you dare not on your own judgment. You see your sins, you feel them, you acknowledge them, but you do not know whether God has forgiven you. You see the Blessing of the Holy Communion, but you cannot

tell whether that blessing shall be yours while in a state of unforgiven sin. Then comes in the Pastoral Office, and says, "Come to me, or some other learned and discreet Minister of God's Word, and open your grief—tell the story of your sins—your temptations, your troubles, your difficulties"—so that you "may receive ghostly comfort and advice to the quieting of your conscience, and that, moreover, you may receive the assurance of this quieting in the benefit of absolution."

And the same gentle, loving spirit is displayed at the bedside of the dying man, as is displayed at the invitation to the Blessed Sacrament. See the Service for Visitation of the Sick. "Here shall the sick man be moved to make a special confession of his sins; if he feel his conscience troubled with any weighty matter." You will observe it is not a general or vague confession as in Matins and Evensong—but a *special* confession of his sins—and he is to be "moved," urgently directed and led to make that confession for the good of his soul, and then, if he desire it—(humbly and heartily desire it)—for if he does not realize its value, it can be of no use—"the priest shall absolve him."

I can now, therefore, safely answer your question. Do I, as your missionary priest, recommend you to come to Confession? I DO.

Now you must not look upon me with suspicion or with prejudice, as bringing before you a strange thing. You must not look upon me as an adviser directing

you to do a thing which I do not practise myself. When I tell you (for I will be perfectly free and open with you), that I myself and your own parish priests of this church and most of those—I should say with confidence *all* that are engaged in this mission—do practise Confession; confessing our sins as Priests, as S. James bids us, one to another. Then, when you ask me, Do I recommend or do I advise private Confession? Of course I DO. This is in great part the very office and intention of our mission. We want to save souls. We know of the lives of the multitude (let alone those of a delicate and scrupulous mind), that gross sin is destroying them; palpable, open, notorious sin; that their faith in the Gospel—even in the very essentials of the Creed—is weakened—in some cases destroyed. We know that these souls are perishing by thousands, as sheep without a shepherd; perishing by the sheer want of some plan by which they can get rid of the burden which weighs them down to the earth, and renders all the other parts of their religion, for want of this one part, useless. Therefore is our advice, exhortation, plea to these souls; therefore is our mission to these souls—"Come and make Confession; come and unburden your conscience; open your grief. Do not let that canker-worm that crawls all over your soul, eating into its vitality; that miserable secret (not known perhaps to man, but known to God), that miserable secret sin, or perhaps *many* secret sins—a *life* of secret sins, go on—as you see

the blight of caterpillars eating up the leaves and sucking out the juice of the trees on which they fasten. I say, do not let these sins go on, to fasten upon you till you die, and awaken up after your sleep of death and find yourself in hell; but come in the all-gracious Sacrament provided for you in the loving arms of your mother the Church, and receive absolution and be safe. Ah! you little know, who have never tried it, the serene peace, the calm joy, the quiet assurance of happiness, which runs through the whole soul of him who has once poured forth his soul in penitential confession. Shame keeps you from it. Fear of man stops you. You are afraid of the ridicule of companions. Ah! but do not you remember—"Whosoever is ashamed of Me in this wicked and adulterous generation, of him will the Son of man be ashamed when He cometh with His holy angels." But, on the other hand, breaking through false shame, conquering a sensitive pride (which I acknowledge to be only natural), bursting through that icy coldness and reserve which has hitherto separated—so fatally separated—the shepherd from his sheep—(the fault has been equally on each side)—confiding in the love, the tender affection, the anxious hope of the confessor whom you choose, be thoroughly convinced that he can have no personal interest in what he does, but only the same love of you as his Divine Master has of him, and that what he exhorts you to do can only be for your good. Get rid of false shame, and remember these words of comfort—

"Whosoever confesseth me before men, him will I confess before my Father which is in heaven."

My brethren, do not imagine that hearing confessions is a pleasant office to the priest. He has indeed many pleasant duties, but certainly this is not one of them. When he hears the confession of a penitent, every sin which that penitent pours out in his confession stabs him directly to the heart, for this he says within himself, "Yes, and I have done the like, and I am an equal sinner with yourself." It is not the man—it is the sacerdotal office. It is that grace which is given by the laying on of hands of the presbytery and the bishop. It is some undefined yet recognised power of the Holy Ghost conveyed by the apostolic commission, "Whosesoever sins ye remit, they are remitted." It must be something, otherwise the whole Ordination Service is a solemn mockery. It must be something; and this something, whatever it be, descends in refreshing dew on the soul of a true penitent, and when he has once delivered himself of his burden, he will go forth as a giant refreshed with wine to fight anew against the enemy of souls, until time after time conquering the sins which so easily beset him, he shall sit in triumphant peace amid the saints in heaven.

May it be to you, may it be to me, that this glorious issue shall be ours. The triumph of the soul over sin is the essence of the thing we desire. "What shall I do to be saved?" That is the cry of souls that have sinned. If you can be saved

any how, "All glory be to God." If you could be saved without Baptism: let it be so. If without the Sacrament of the Altar: let it be so. If without repenting of the sins which you have committed: let it be so. And if it be without any resort to means of grace other and subsidiary to these, such as Prayer and hearing the Word: let it be so. That you should be saved at all hazards is the thing. And so with confession. When either the deceptions of the enemy are undermining your appeal to any sacramental grace, or the delusions of private judgment, are raising you above the necessity of help from any source save yourself; and nevertheless your sins, spite of all, lie there brooding upon your soul as a foul and horrid incubus in the visions of the night—and still you will do nothing—"I am safe," you say, "I am well, I am no worse than others,—there is peace; I am quite happy:" let it be so. But hear the voice of Jesus to S. Peter, "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou Me? Feed my sheep." "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou Me? Feed my lambs." This is for us. This is our business—our holy commission as priests —and we must not shrink from it. It is laid upon us as the burden of our office. And for what is this commission? For what is this office? Is it not just for this very purpose, that you, the flock, may be saved, comforted, tended, brought into the fold, brought back as the lost sheep out of the mountains whither you have strayed?

Come, then, through the pastor on earth, to the Chief Pastor in heaven. By the love which binds the Church all round the hearts of her children, and wins them to unity and to peace; be no longer content to slave on in your sins, the subjects of Satan, drooping under his tyranny, unable to look up, seeing no light, no Saviour, no hope: but arise and be free. Become once more the servants of God. Come with David when the prophet tells you "Thou art the man," and say, "I have sinned against the Lord." Come with the publicans and the soldiers, and the people flocking around the standard of John Baptist in Jordan, "Confessing their sins." Come with the humble publican smiting on his breast and saying, "Lord, be merciful to me a sinner!" and then let the priest say over you the gracious words (by the authority committed to him by Jesus Christ) "I absolve thee from all thy sins, in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

SEVENTH DAY OF THE MISSION.

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 19, 1869.

The New Life.

S. Matthew vii. 21.

"NOT EVERY ONE THAT SAITH UNTO ME LORD, LORD, SHALL ENTER INTO THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN, BUT HE THAT DOETH THE WILL OF MY FATHER WHICH IS IN HEAVEN."

Sermon VII.

THE NEW LIFE.

The penitent sinner released from his sins, confessed, and absolved by the Sacrament of Penance, looks around him. What does he see? How does he feel? The manacles about his hands are cut asunder; the fetters cramping his feet are burst through; all that burden that weighed him heavily to the earth is lifted off. He is free. Jesus has said, "Loose him and let him go."

The question is, What is he to do with this freedom?

If you have ever watched the tide of the great sea at the flood—as it rolls in on the western coast, from the Atlantic—you will have often seen some mighty wave, larger than the rest, bearing in upon the shore. Place yourself as a shipwrecked mariner on the crest of that wave; and you will be carried on by its natural force, and touch the sand. But be quick if you want to keep the shore. Make use of your time the very moment you touch ground; or that mighty wave, with its impetuous reflex force, will sweep you back again, and you will be no safer than you were.

Thus then you have come to land. You have made your confession, you are absolved, you are free, but what are you the better for it; if that be all.

Perhaps you are saying something like this just now to yourself:—

"I have repented of my sins. My heart is converted, I have turned away from the past, but there is the future; What am I to do with that? Nay, there is the present; while I am just fresh from receiving the Grace of the Holy Ghost. What am I to do with that?"

If it be all true and real; if you are sincere, the answer is plain: you are to lead a NEW LIFE. Observe my dear brethren—You are told by Almighty God, as the servant in the parable—"Do I thank you for all this? I trow not." You are told—"Now begin your work; gird up your loins and make ready and serve me; you have only done that which was your duty to do." Or, like the young man who had kept all the Commandments from his youth up. Very well. Now "Take up your Cross and follow **Me.**" Or, as more particularly applies to us as priests, when Our Blessed Lord asks S. Peter—"Simon, Son of Jonas, lovest thou Me?" and when He has ascertained that he does love Him. Very well—now the new life is to begin, "Feed my sheep—Feed my lambs." That is, Prove your repentance—Realize your forgiveness—Manifest your love by the work of my Church.

The stoker lights the fire. That is the beginning.

Then he applies the water. Then he raises the water to a boiling temperature. Then he gains his steam, which is his motive power. But what of all that? Of what use is this motive power remaining there and evaporating in the condensation of the steam? He must apply the steam to his engine. He does so. Then the piston begins to work, and the wheels to revolve, and the carriage to advance.

So, my brethren, all this that I suppose you to have done. Your repentance, contrition, conversion, self-examination, your confession—all this must go forward, and the new life must begin to move.

Let me, in imagination, throw you forward six months. Let me ask you to pass on in your lives, by anticipation, to the beautiful month of May—carrying you through Advent, Christmas, Epiphany, Lent, and Easter—until you come to (as it is called in this neighbourhood) "the Season."

Pursuing very fairly, as you would say, the keeping of this Mission, you have been assiduous in prayer—both in the Church and at home. You have gone through your ordinary duties, (as you would call them,) and have come to Church a great deal more than you used to do. Moreover, perhaps, you have attended that which is the highest duty of your religion; in fact, that without which all the rest is useless—The Blessed Sacrament. There, at this altar, you have knelt and adored Jesus. There you have, together with the other times, prayed—at

least, made profession of prayer—many, many times. Perhaps, also—for there is something very fascinating in going to confession (weak minds lean on it, and are glad to shift their own responsibility on to the shoulders of the priest)—perhaps, then, you have done this also; and with other such like things you have, all through these imaginary six months, performed your duties of devotion, *i.e.*, you have been going on very fairly, according to the words of the text, saying, "Lord, Lord."

Now dare you affirm on that ground, high as it may seem to you, that you have begun a "new life?" Can you say on that ground, that your religion is complete? That out of a past, dead life of sin, or of worldliness, or of apathy, and deadness towards God, you have, by these many prayers, and Sacraments, and confessions, externally, theoretically, perfunctorily attended (as perhaps they may have been)—merely by *that*, can you say, "Now I have obtained the life of religion—I am doing fairly; doing all that I need?"

My brethren, this is a broad statement, to arrest your mind and fix your attention on the question: What sort of religion yours is. Is it a mere perfunctory religion? What I mean by perfunctory is this—a religion performed in its outside duties as a matter of course, without any care for a life and spirit within it. "Here is a magnificent church, and here is a well-ordered choir, and here are beautiful hymns, and things are done to my taste, and, more-

over, there is an attractive preacher. I go to this church because I like it." But perhaps nothing more is the result. One Sunday comes, and you go to church, and you sit down, and listen and look: and nothing is the result. Another Sunday comes, and you go to church again, and you sit down, and you hear another sermon: and nothing is the result. Take a year. You began last Advent Sunday and you went on to Christmas; you went on again in Lent and came to Easter; you went on again to Whitsuntide; you went on again throughout the long season of Trinity, which this day we conclude. Well! are you just the same now as before?

Perhaps to this question you will reply to me with another. "What is it that you require of me?" you will say. "Do I not come to church and say my prayers? Do I not bring my family all in good order every Sunday morning at eleven o'clock? Do I not make my responses, and say the Creed, and listen to the sermon—everything that can be done by a good churchman? What more can you want of me?"

My Christian brother, it is not I that want anything more of you, but it is your Master and Lord, Jesus Christ. It is He who says, "Why call ye Me Lord, Lord, and do not the things that I say." "Not every one that calleth me Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in Heaven."

Placing yourself in this external ostentation of

religion, or going through with yourself a certain quantity of outside prayers, or performing steadily enough certain acts of devotion with the body, and then, nothing more to come of it. This is the most dangerous position for a man's soul to be in—the most dangerous of all the different dangers that beset us. It is called in Holy Scripture "lip service," "bodily exercise," and it is said to "profit nothing." It is the religion of the Pharisees, who washed their hands before meat, but inwardly were ravening wolves, full of corruption; who "paid tithes of mint, anise, and cummin, but neglected the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith." It is that kind of religion which, by its very speciousness, leads the soul the more rapidly to destruction, because it seems something. It is like one of those apples of Sodom that travellers tell us of—so beautiful outside, so fair to look upon, such an appearance of being full of juice and nourishment—you press it with your hand—lo! it contains nothing but dust and rotten powder.

What then is this "new life" which you are to begin? The new life is simply this—doing the will of God. The question is, whether you are doing it. Most of the world does not even do what you have done. Most men never think of God at all, never pray at all, never attend any Divine service at all, in any form or in any shape. I do not speak of this form of Christianity or that—of one division of the Church, as among

ourselves, or any other division—but altogether, I say that the bulk of the world is of no religion at all, and without God. But I pass by these, and take you, my brethren, of this congregation who are attending this Mission, attending to its services and prayers, and I ask *you*—is that all you are going to do? Is that, after all your confessions and your manifestations of repentance, all that you are going to show to God?

Question yourselves then. It is true I have said "Lord, Lord" all this number of times; but have I done His Will? It is true I have made confession of sin; but have I abandoned sin? It is true I have expressed my faith; but have I shown forth the fruits of faith? It is true I have said in prayer to God in the Blessed Sacrament many times, "We offer and present unto Thee, O Lord, ourselves, our souls and bodies, to be a reasonable, holy, and lively sacrifice;" but have I fully attempted to make them so? *i.e.*, to sacrifice my passions, my evil habits, my pride, my sensuality, worldliness, or *anything*—have I ever made a sacrifice really and truly of anything to God? Well, if not, what good all this number of times in which I have said "Lord, Lord?"

It is good to go into details. A practical example brings a truth right home to the heart more than anything else. Then take it in this way. The Lord's Prayer is, I suppose, the prayer in which we come to God and say, "Lord, Lord," more than

any other. I suppose, at the lowest computation, each one of us says it twice a day; we who come to the hours of Matins and Evensong, and to the daily celebration, say it about ten times a day. We have then to strike an average. Each one of us, from the boys in the choir up to the priests who minister in the holy things of the congregation, says the Lord's Prayer about two thousand times in the year.

Now we are guarded by our Lord against priding ourselves in saying prayers often, against much speaking in prayer. That must mean repeating prayers over and over again without attending to them. Now let us see. In this case we have said to God, within the year, no less than two thousand times, "Our Father." But have we treated Him as a Father? loved him? been obedient to Him? manifested by any act that we considered ourselves His children? Have we done any deed for Him, to show that we hold Him to be our Father?

So have we said, "Hallowed be Thy Name." I will not imagine any great or violent desecration of which we may have been guilty—dishonouring His Name. But what have we done to hallow it? There have been infidel writings, blasphemous publications; men have denied the inspiration of God's Scriptures; men have risen up to blaspheme in courts of law the doctrines of His Church. Have we done any act, so as to take part in the defence of God's Name against these men and these things? If not,

if we have been all this year mere lookers-on, and have done nothing, of what value then the two thousand, "Lord, Lords."

Then we say, "Thy Kingdom come." There are several kingdoms set up against God's: the kingdom of the world, all round about us; of the flesh, all within us; and the devil, who rules over all, and directs through us his attacks against God. Now, the question is, what have we done for the Kingdom of God—*i.e.*, for holiness, righteousness, the spread of the Gospel, the salvation of souls, the good of the Church, against the kingdom of the devil. There are schools for poor, teaching for children, penitents to reclaim, sinners to win. Can you look back over the fifty-two weeks, the three hundred and sixty-five days, and say, such and such a thing I did for God's Kingdom? If not, of what value the two thousand times you have repeated with inadvertent lips, "Lord, Lord?"

Go on: "Thy Will be done, on earth as it is in Heaven." Now we every one of us know that we have a will within us which is utterly opposed to God's Will. We would have a number of things that God will not let us have, and we would escape from and avoid a number of things that God's Will puts upon us. Now, in either case, how have we acted? There came a cross against us here or there—a sickness or a sorrow, a disappointment or a vexation, how did we stand up to bear it? Temper, irritation of mind, fretfulness, peevishness, crossness, sourness, hasty

words of spite, of anger, or of coldness; has not that been too often the way in which we have responded in act to the prayer we were daily using with our lips? How many of our "Lord, Lords," have been here, too, but a sad, sad mockery.

Then you went on thus—"Give us this day our daily bread." What did you mean by that? It was an acknowledgment of your entire dependence upon God for sustenance and provision; it was as much as to say—"no power of mine, no skill of mine, no cleverness, dexterity, or management of mine can protect me, sustain me; me, my children, my interests, my profession, my business. It is all under God; I can do nothing without Him; I must cast all my care upon Him, for, He careth for me. It is not I that earn, but God that gives, my daily bread." Well, but has it been so in act? Has it never happened that you have refused to give up an hour's business for an hour's religion? Has the call of God to go and serve Him never been answered by you as the call to the marriage feast was? "I have a farm to attend to, or a yoke of oxen to try?—*i.e.*, have you not (in honest reality) been many times thinking how it was your own attention to business, your own calculations of the world, your own schemes and plans, your own labour and industry that was to be depended upon, rather than God, to Whom you were with the mouth saying, "Give me this day my daily bread." Ah, my dear brethren, what have you been doing all these fifty-two weeks, with that

mockery of your lips. I must tell you from God, your "Lord, Lords," are an abomination in His sight.

Further, you have said, "Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us." By which you put forward the idea that many may have sinned against you. They have, no doubt. You have received many injuries; men have done you a great many wrongs. "On such a day, at such a time, A insulted me, B defrauded me, C spoke falsehoods against me, but I forgive them all; I do forgive them all, because that is the condition upon which I hope to be forgiven myself when I commit sin against God." That is what you *say;* but is it true? *Have* you forgiven them; is there no grudge left against them? Have you forgiven, not until seven times, but until seventy times seven? And your own sins—your own trespasses. By the very words of your prayer you acknowledge there are some. "Forgive my trespasses." But have you taken any trouble to ascertain what they are? Do you examine yourself every night before you sleep, and think over your sins? Do you examine them to yourself? Do you confess them—repent of them? Do you strive the next day not to commit them again? There are certain means by which (applying the cause) you can reach to the forgiveness which is promised. Those means are the Sacraments. Now then of course, beholding the cause—Jesus Christ; and beholding the means by which Jesus Christ is applied to you—the Sacraments;

when you say, "Forgive my trespasses," you do not imagine that God will forgive you in any other way than through the Sacraments. There is the Sacrament of Baptism, of Confession, and of the Holy Eucharist. Do you imagine that after Baptism (which you have received) you may sin as much as you please, and yet be forgiven? Clearly you do not—because you have gone on saying these words—(as I have supposed) two thousand times in the last fifty-two weeks. Then it must be the other two Sacraments to which you, seeking to obtain forgiveness, must apply. Now the question is thrust home—have you applied to those Sacraments? No. There you go on in your sins. There you go on praying, "Forgive me my sins." Then the all-unmerciful God says, "Go to the Sacraments of my Church and you shall have forgiveness of sins." But you refuse to go. Oh, my dear brother or sister in Christ, what a mockery this is! what a delusion! with what a dreadful aggravation will these many times in which you have said this prayer be brought against you at the last day! Oh, how fearfully will you be called upon to answer for the mockery of your words, "Lord, Lord, forgive," when He tells you what to do to gain the forgiveness you ask and you refuse to do it.

Still, again, you pray—"Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil." How much evil there is round about us—how multiform—how various—how incessant—it requires not much ob-

servation to know. Again, this evil of which we speak is involved in temptation. How involved, whence arising, we also know—the evil spirit of Satan, who "is ever going about seeking whom He may devour." Well, then, knowing that we are in this condition, we pray. *Temptation* is the channel by which the evil comes. We pray against that temptation. Now, at the same time, we thus pray, we are taught by the Church that there are certain safe-guards *in act* which He has provided for the very purpose of avoiding, or rendering harmless this very temptation about which we are praying. You are in the water—you are drowning—plunging about—helpless. The evil spirit of destruction has you, and you call out and pray, "Save me, save me!" I throw you out from the shore a life-preserver You will not reach out your hand to touch it, but you go on crying out "Save me, save me!" Of course you are drowned. What is the life-preserver against the temptation of the devil? The very same as you saw before consisting in the means of forgiveness. The great, and mysterious and wonderful Sacrament of the altar is that life-preserver. You say, "I am in temptation, deliver me from it." There is lust, or pride, or anger, or covetousness. There they are tempting you. You know very well that you cannot save yourself from the great fascination with which they surround you. You know theoretically—you know practically—that you are in immediate danger, and,

therefore, you pray "Deliver me." But as you pray, the Church says,—Jesus Christ Himself says, "He that eateth My Flesh and drinketh My Blood hath eternal life, and I will raise him at the last day." The Holy Ghost says—through the Church—that by the Sacrament of the altar, we have the "strengthening and refreshing of our souls by the Body and Blood of Christ." You observe the word "strengthen;" strengthening our weakness—refreshing our exhaustion in the danger of temptation. Well then—just as before—can a man go on consistently and say, "Deliver me—save me—help me," and then when an act is provided by which he may gain what he wants, refuse that act, and still go on praying. What can be the use of it? What can be the meaning of such an inconsistency? Worse than inconsistency—mockery of the mercy and the love, and the long-suffering of our good and gracious God, Whom, all the while, as children, we are calling upon and saying—"Our Father."

It is a serious thing to tamper with God. You may be a clever politician, and tamper with the things of Cæsar; but take care what you do with the things of God. There may be diplomacy in the courts of kings; but Almighty God, in His Court, looks to see in you a perfect consistency between your words and your actions. There may be a kind of religion which consists in sentimental exclamations, or in temporary excitements, of feelings, of warm aspirations, sudden impulses of the will

kindled by external movements—as of sermons, or beautiful music, of ecstatic hymns, stirring up the heart to cry "Lord! Lord!" But may it not be—I fear it often is—as the wind that passes through the pipes of an organ—it makes a pleasant sound, and then departs: or as the rushing of water down the steeps of a cataract, very fine and beautiful as it passes, but in a very few minutes lost in the spray of the waters below: as the shooting of an arrow that passes through the air, cutting its way for an instant in energetic flight; but the air closes in, and it is seen no more. It is as the Prophet Hosea describes the Children of Israel—"Your goodness is as the morning cloud, and as the early dew, it goeth away."

My brethren, I would ask you to do two things. They are both of them so simple, so self-evident, that I am sure you cannot refuse me them—and however simple and self-evident they are—yet I will guarantee to you that on your doing them your souls shall be saved. These are the two things:—

1. When you say a prayer, *mean* what you say. Let it be in your mind really to want that which you *say* you want.

And 2. Take measures in your own life, and as far as your power goes, to co-operate with God in the fulfilment of your prayers.

There are two very different things about which men continually make mistakes. It is one thing to be in a state of grace—*i.e.* free from sin—and

another thing to live up to that state of grace. Being in a state of grace is of course essential for the beginning, but it is not sufficient for the end. If we attend services, make frequent prayers, love beautiful churches, follow after good preachers, are busy about external decorations, make a great demonstration of enthusiasm about ritual and ceremonial, and at the same time are without mortal sin, (if so it be,) we may be then in a state of grace; but for the "new life" that is by no means enough. We must pursue all this into such a state of active obedience to God, as to bring us to a daily, hourly, never ceasing conformity with His will. A state of grace may be a mere abstinence from sin. The new life must be union with God. A state of grace may have unsteadiness of purpose, fickleness of pursuit, lukewarmness of love; if so, it will not long remain, but will quickly die out; but anyhow, it is not sufficient to form the "*new life*," for the new life is an adaptation of the whole character, temper, pursuits, desires, hopes, to those of God. What God would be, were He on earth (as He once was), so must we be. His will, His perfectness, His sanctity, His entire impossibility of being or doing wrong, must be ours. We may not attain it—perhaps never shall—but it must be our aim. Go on, then, my dear brethren, in striving after this perfection. The striving will be your "New Life."

EIGHTH DAY OF THE MISSION.

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 21, 1869.

The Call.

S. Matt. xx. 6.

"WHY STAND YE HERE ALL THE DAY IDLE?"

SERMON VIII.

THE CALL.

I WENT into the harvest-field when the sheaves were standing thick with corn, and proposed this question:—"Why stand ye here all the day idle?" The reapers stood astonished. "*Idle!*" they exclaimed. "Why, we have been at labour here all the day—from the morning, when the sun rose, up to the time when now, as you see, the moon is rising to give light upon the earth. We have not rested—no not once—all through the burden and heat of the day."

I went into a factory, where I saw multitudes of men, and women, nay, even tender children, and I proposed this question. The working people stood astonished. "*Idle!*" they exclaimed. "Why, the factory bell rings at six in the morning, and here we have been slaving, and shall be slaving on till six o'clock again, day after day. And what a pittance we earn. We know not what it is to rest. Would that you could see what our labour is; you would not call us idle."

I went into the market-place, and proposed the question again. The farmers were busy driving up

and down their cattle, and they were very earnest in making bargains about the price of corn, of hay, and of cheese. They were so very eager about what they had to do, that I had to repeat the question. "Idle!" they exclaimed in astonishment. "Why, we have travelled miles and miles, through foul weather and fair, by road and by railway. The toil of conveying all this produce has cost many hours of most laborious fatigue. You do not know the difficulties and vexations which we have to undergo. If you did, you would not call us idle."

I went, in London and at Liverpool, into the Stock Exchange; there I saw the merchants and the traders from all parts of the world, and proposed my question again. "Idle!" they exclaimed. I must tell you that they had wonderful account books and ledgers, and were hurrying hither and thither into shops, wharves, banks, and into dark, loathsome offices, begrimed with smoke; anxious and eager faces they all had, and much care evidently rested on their calculations. Some looked triumphant in success; but others seemed indeed to be sinking into their grave in disappointment and dismay. "Ah!" said they, "you must be a very ignorant man, otherwise you would not ask such a question of us."

Again I passed on, and saw magnificent shops. Men and women were plying behind counters, displaying their wares; piles of merchandize stood on shelves and in the windows, and many works of men's art shone in beauty through the panes of glass.

I proposed my question to the wondering people within—for there were many, not only sellers but buyers—but they said, "Idle! Why our whole mind is taken up in the arrangement of all these matters. Early in the morning we are obliged to be at our posts to receive customers, and late at night we take no rest—accounts to be made up, and parcels to be sent, and bills to be filed. Indeed, if you knew what we were, you would be forced to acknowledge that we do but eat the bread of carefulness, and are anything but idle."

I went into a large and open camp, where I saw multitudes of men, all clad in the same uniform, handling the same weapons, and marching hither and thither in the same array, and I watched them until, after a long and wearisome journey, jaded and worn out, they lay upon the cold ground, and bivouacked there for the night. I then proposed to them my question. It seemed to them preposterous —"Why stand ye here all the day idle?" "Idle! Our labour is intense—our inspections, our drill, our parade, our marching, countermarching, the strictness of our discipline—we dare not disobey a single order, however minute. Our lives are one continued work, ready for all climates, prepared for every emergency, subject to every vicissitude."

I went down to a certain palace near Westminster Abbey. It was indeed a most magnificent palace, and there was a grand spacious room, large enough to hold 658 members (as they were called), and

there I saw a majestic person sitting in state on an elevated chair, with curious symbols of authority all around him; and all the great men, going in and out, were discussing the affairs of nations—how to levy taxes on the people for the support of Government—how to make laws for the administration of justice—how to get rid of a Church which was troublesome in the discords which it caused—how to manage education for children so that they might not know anything about religion—how to build ships of war with the greatest power of destruction, and equip armies so as to go forth to battle and slay the largest number of human souls within the range of possibility. Well, there they sat, some on one side, who had evidently the superiority in point of numbers, and others on the other side who, though inferior in numbers, still contended for the principles which they held in opposition to the others. And I saw one or two very leading men who harangued the rest, and held them, by their oratorical powers, and evident superiority of intellect, in complete subjection. And I observed that the whole of them, both on one side and the other, worked on most laboriously for months and months in the work which I just described—sometimes all night, even to three and four o'clock in the morning, harassed, weary, and fatigued.

Now I thought it my duty even here to make my call. I was aware that they were very great men, and that my intrusion would probably be resented; but

still I had an idea that there was a power even greater than theirs—so fearlessly I plunged in among them. "Why stand ye here all the day idle?" You cannot conceive the tumult that the question excited. "Idle! Why, our whole life is one continued slavery; we go through endless toil, trouble, vexation, anxiety; and are compelled to be guilty of all sorts of dishonourable things, such as bribery, and corruption of every kind, to get here; so much is this the case, that one of us in the terror of his conscience, was driven not long ago to commit suicide. And then, when going through so much mud, we do at last get here, it is, as you see, a perfect slavery of labour, undermining our health, destroying our domestic happiness, and bringing us prematurely to our graves. Anyhow, whatever we are, you cannot call us idle."

At last I ceased to propose my call any longer. I saw that no one understood it. I perceived that we must have been using the word "idle" in two different senses. Certain it was, that all these men were very laborious, practising great exertion, bestowing infinite pains and trouble on the several occupations of their lives, and so, in one sense, were not idle; but then it was in reference to an object quite different from the one which I had in view when I asked them the question, and this they could not understand.

And so, my brethren, it may now be the case—the very same thing may now be the case—with you. I

ask you the question in this house of God—"Why stand ye here all the day idle?" You reply, "Look at my life: am I not most industrious? Do I not live a life of the most active labour? Am I not all day long at my business? I rise early in the morning, I am never absent from my post, I very often deny myself the usual rest at night. It is not fair to ask me such a question, implying that I am an idle man."

Perhaps the parable from which I have derived the question will clear up the difficulty. The parable is this: "The Kingdom of Heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, who went out early in the morning to hire labourers into his vineyard." In doing so he finds from hour to hour through the day men who were standing unemployed. And then, looking to the vineyard, which needed labourers, he says as a preliminary to his invitation to them, "Why stand ye here all the day idle?" Therefore you will observe that when I now ask the question—as it is put in the parable—I ask it in reference to the same object as that which the parable has in view. It is no answer in the farmer, the harvest-labourer, the factory workman, the soldier, the banker, the tradesman, the Member of the House of Commons, to point to his industrious and laborious life, so long as that industrious and laborious life points merely to the object of this present world; it is of no application of the word "idle" when it is asked with reference to the King-

dom of Heaven—the state of the soul, the relationship in which we stand towards God—to answer it in a different sense. It is just as in the case of our Blessed Lord, when He had worked the miracle of the loaves for five thousand. The multitude came to Him the next day in eager search for Him, and he replied, "I see why you come. Ye seek me not because ye saw the miracle, but because ye did eat of the loaves and were filled. Labour not for the meat which perisheth." And this is the case now. There is labour; there is industry; there is an immense quantity of work done. We grant that; but still the question comes home just as close as ever, "Why stand ye here all the day idle?" Simply because it is all spent upon a different object from that which the Lord Jesus Christ says is the true object of every man's life—the Kingdom of Heaven.

Three things are apparent in this question, combined with the answer which I received in my several calls. One, that there is in man a very remarkable faculty—that of labour. The second, that in most cases he uses that faculty of labour upon a wrong object. The third, that in so doing he deprives himself of the highest part of his being, as a soul meant for immortality.

1. Labour is the curse of God pronounced upon man for sin. "By the sweat of thy brow shalt thou eat bread." The earth was to "bring forth thorns and thistles;" no fruit was to come spontaneously from the fields; food was not to be obtained easily;

man was to go forth, as David says, "unto his work and unto his labour until the evening." And this nature of man in his fall was not only in bodily, but in mental things also. No science, no art, no civilization, no knowledge could be obtained without corresponding study—which is labour. And we know this from experience. The physician comes to heal your body, or the surgeon your wounds; the botanist is presented to you skilled in the knowledge of herbs, and the geologist in the formation of the earth; the divine has set forth the doctrines of the Church; and the statesman the theory of government. But not one of them without the study of many and many a laborious hour. Thus it runs through all. In proportion to the labour, the work, the anxiety, the study of the intellectual man, is the success and attainment of civilization, and all the blessings which we have in our present position as men above the nature of savages. I need not say more on this head. It is plain and patent to all.

2. But I would rather dwell on the second consideration: namely, that our habit is to direct this labouring faculty to a wrong purpose. "What!" it will be said, "are not those subjects which you have mentioned—namely, the labour of man for the production of food, the carefulness of man in the trade and commerce of nations, the studies of man in the arts and sciences of civilization, the intellectual exercise of man in politics and legislation—are they

not right objects?" In themselves of course they are. Not only right, but necessary. They are unavoidable, from the very fact which I mentioned as the origin of it all—the curse of God for the sin of man. True, indeed, God tempers the curse of labour by bringing many a sweetness and pleasure into the midst of it: as what can be a greater pleasure to the student than the acquisition of knowledge; or what greater delight to the painter than the perception of beautiful sights, or to the musician than hearing sweet sounds. Yes; God is so very merciful and loving to us. But that is not the question. I still say, if this be all, it is a wrong object, simply for this reason, that it all appertains to a mere state of being which is perishable; that it deprives us—if contained and circumscribed within its own sphere—it deprives us of the very end and object of our whole being.

Here is a great reward; a great and final and everlasting reward, to souls born in Baptism of the Holy Ghost: Eternal life. Here is another reward: riches, reputation, glory, personal superiority, eminence among men; but all this latter is of the inferior part of the being of a man, seeing that it does not last. If the pursuit of that which is inferior, although right, (as being necessary) of itself, is pursued to such an extent that it hinders another pursuit which is superior; if we dedicate so much of our time, of our thoughts, and occupations, to the labour required in a matter which is evanescent and (in

comparison of another) trivial, childish, and unimportant; of course such a pursuit is no longer praiseworthy but absolutely wrong. That may be right and praiseworthy as a secondary and tributary occupation, but immediately becomes wrong when it assumes the sole place or the first place. Martha was right in her anxious care to serve Jesus her Lord in household matters, but wrong directly those household matters so interfered that she lost sight of the spiritual truths which her Lord came to teach; and therefore the rebuke, "Martha, Martha, thou art cumbered about many things, but one thing is needful." The three men in the parable were in the several duties which they were performing, perfectly right, abstractedly and in themselves. One having oxen to prove, the other having bought a farm, the other having married a wife. All those were duties which they were legitimately called upon to perform, and if they had not performed them they would have been wrong: but the error was in pursuing the performance of those duties, when once shown to be minor duties, in preference to a greater one which was simultaneously proposed. The rich man whose fields brought forth so plentifully that he did not know where to bestow his goods, did nothing wrong in building a larger barn where he might bestow them; it was worldly prudence making use of the blessings of God. But his error was manifested in the exclamation which he made, "Soul, thou hast many goods laid up for many years; eat, drink, and

be merry." He was so entirely wrapped up in them; his heart was so entirely absorbed in them; the world in which he was to enjoy them was so all in all to him, that he forgot that there was another; he forgot that though he addressed his soul, that it was a soul that could die eternally: so then came the rebuke to awaken him, "Thou fool." It was the thought and act of a "fool," of an irrational man, of one who knew not his real interest. "Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall all those things be which thou hast provided?"

Thus then, my brethren, I have a right to ask my question, and so ask it again,—"Why stand ye here all the day idle?" I call that idleness, (Almighty God and Jesus Christ call that idleness, which, however it may appear to others, or you may think within yourselves to be hard work,) — still I call that "idleness" which shows no labour in the cause of God; no work either for your own soul, or the soul of others. You say, that you are doing work for God, that you are attentive to religious duties, are constantly found at Church, frequently receive the Blessed Sacrament, and so forth. I would ask you in reply, On what days are these things done? If only on Sundays, I should not allow it, (except only partially,) to be a work, because the world never interferes with you then; indeed the world rather helps you; for human laws—even human laws—command an observance of the Lord's Day; common decency

would not allow you to work in a factory or keep open shop, or buy and sell on that day. So far indeed you are not an absolutely and openly profane and ungodly man; but still, if that be all, I should not count it for much work. As there is such a thing evidently as worldly industry, so there is such a thing as religious idleness; and although you may be a very hard worker in trade, or commerce, or law, or statesmanship, and do your duty admirably in your secular business; and although combined with that you do not display any scandal to religion by an immoral life, and so are leading (as far as men are concerned) an irreproachable life; and although combined with even that you make on a Sunday a very fair show in the flesh, by a decently faithful attendance upon the ordinances of the Church; still I must persevere in making my call, "Why stand ye here all the day idle?" Because all this and a great deal more than this may be quite compatible with a life and an affection, only making religion a subsidiary thing, a secondary thing to another.

What sort of progress will that soldier make on parade who in marching advances with his feet one way, but turning all the while his face another? What kind of ploughing would it be in a field when the man holding the plough forward, was all the time looking behind? Our Lord tells you, "He that puts his hand to the plough, looking back, is not fit for the kingdom of God." What sort of weaving would it be in any of the factories if the

warp, or longitudinal threads, were ever so clearly fixed, and yet the shuttle, containing the weft, or woof, was never thrown in the right place? What way does the ship make at sea when part of the sails are set windward and another part on the opposite tack? It is called "lying to"—she makes no progress at all.

No, my dear brethren, Almighty God says, "Son, give me thine heart," that is, thy *whole* heart, not half of it. That lover would find but ill grace with his mistress who told her, or manifested by his actions, that he loved her somewhat, but that he loved another equally well. So it must be with God. You cannot take service with two masters; for you must in such a case love the one and hate the other. Examine yourselves, my dear brethren, and you will find it so. You love the world, and the things of the world—you cannot love God also. You may try, you may imagine that you can, but when tested you will find your failure. You cannot be at work all day, and sometimes all night, in the pursuit of gain, the labours of your profession, the cares of business, or the glory of statesmanship, and then come, as a secondary matter, to church on Sunday, and presume to say you are doing work for God. It is the fallacy which most men fall into, and seldom find their mistake until they die. You cannot r ecline on the easy chairs of your drawing-rooms, culling the sweet-smelling flowers of a fashionable life; you cannot shut yourselves up in your

library among the sweet studies of scientific pursuits; you cannot sell your whole moral honesty (as proved in the many remarkable revelations of the last year) for the vain glory of a political status in society, which in reality is nothing but sand; you cannot go about the streets and spend your time in the club windows reading the newspapers, and gossiping about the things of the day; and then lull yourself to sleep, fancying yourself safe, simply because you do no harm. The country gentleman, spending all his week in the sports of the field, and then condescendingly appearing at church on Sunday morning for example's sake to his tenants; the fine lady, amusing herself all the week with balls, with dresses, with jewels, and with operas, and then coming into God's house preceded by a footman carrying a prayer-book bound in morocco, and opening her pew door as he would that of her drawing-room; the rich tradesman, having all the week turned his ledger in every direction, rejoicing in the promise of a speedy fortune, then for once, for only one solitary hour out of the one hundred and sixty-eight, reaching out his hand to God; the critic of sermons, following hither and thither, as he finds by advertisement where the best preachers can be heard, with itching ears and censorious spirit, forgetting that there is such a text for his sermon as this—"Take heed how ye hear;" the accidental lounger—"it is a fine morning, or the newspaper has not come, or the last novel is but dull, so, nothing better to do,

let us go to church"—or among the poor (for, my dear brethren, though I am now speaking mainly to the rich, the poor also have their faults) "the children are at school," or "the dinner is quite ready," or "all our clothes are good, I don't see anything to hinder it, let us go to church,"—oh, let me appeal to you—are these the hearts that God asks for, or, that I may say it without offence, that God deserves? No! But these are the "religious idlers," the men that give all their real affection, their real work, their zeal, their love, their anxiety, their care, to the world; and then throw their residue, their offscourings, their left-off clothes, what they can spare, to God.

You will say, What is the work that we have to do for God? I will tell you, if God will, before this Mission terminates. Meanwhile, this I say, that God must have the first place in your affections, or He will have none; the first and choicest of your study, the brightest and the longest hours of your labour, the firstling of your flock, the lamb that has no blemish, otherwise He will have none.

Lo! He points to the heavenly kingdom. He shows you where it is. He describes to you its joys. He promises you its blessings. But then, He says, you must work for Me, to gain them. Lo! He points to the holy angels doing Him service in heaven, all nature labouring for His glory—the stars in the firmament encircling His throne—the wind and storm fulfilling His word—the saints bow-

ing down before Him in His worship—the confessors with their sufferings—the martyrs with their blood —the holy virgins with their self-denial—the spirits of just men made perfect in their trials—and to you He says, "Behold, how these have laboured in My cause, what work they have done for Me, how they have given Me their hearts, their substance, their lives, their all. Oh, my disciples, loved of Me, taught of Me, born of Me, with these examples before you, "Why stand ye here all the day idle?"

NINTH DAY OF THE MISSION.

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 22, 1869

The Answer.

S. Matthew xx. 7.

"BECAUSE NO MAN HATH HIRED US."

SERMON IX.

THE ANSWER.

THIS is the answer to the question put to us yesterday. The question was, "Why stand ye here all the day idle?" and now the answer is, "Because no man hath hired us." I must acknowledge that upon the whole and generally, this is a reasonable answer. It is not found fault with by our Blessed Lord in His parable as being wrong, therefore we may conclude that it was reasonable. And so I believe the same of ourselves, at the present day. The preacher puts it to his people, the parish priest to his congregation, the missionary, as I do now to you, my brethren, as to those who attend his mission,—why do you not come into the Lord's vineyard and work for Him? Why is every one so listless, apathetic, lukewarm, both about his own soul, and about the works of the Church? When there is so much to do, so many thousands of heathens, of poor, of sinners, of ignorant, of lost souls, of dissenters, of schismatics; why is it that so few care about it, so few are ready to enter into the lists and do battle against the enemy of souls; so few love God so as to strive to serve Him, so few the Church so as to defend and extend it;

so few love Jesus Christ so as to be anxious for the spread of His Gospel and the strengthening of His Kingdom? Now though I put it thus strongly yet I believe it to be quite a fair answer in many cases, "No man hath hired us."

In one sense, of course, every one is by baptism "hired." Every one is nominally and formally called, and made the servant and soldier of Christ when he is baptized. We use those very words in the dedication of every Christian to God. But I do not use the word in that sense now, because baptism as in infants requires to be developed in the training of the youthful mind. It is not in their baptism that they fail, but in the after development of baptism, in the teaching of the catholic faith, and the discipline of catholic duty. Every ninety-nine souls out of a hundred are never taught even their catechism; they never know anything of the Church or her creed, or her sacraments; and in this sense it is that they are not "hired." For, my brethren, what is the usual course of the education which children receive. They are sent to school to learn to prepare themselves—not for the Church's vineyard, but for the world. What are the advertisements which you read about schools? "A commercial education," "A classical education." "Boys to be prepared to compete for the Civil Service, for the Army, for the Colleges of Oxford and Cambridge?" With what end? What is called advancement in life. And as for men, so for women. Accomplishments, display, knowledge of a

number of things which can only be useful for the world. No reference to the Church, the poor, the position and duty which awaits them as servants of Jesus Christ. Try it by the remembrance which you have of your own education: try it by the schools and teachers under whom you have been placed yourselves, or are placing now your own children. You will find it too true. Nay, perhaps even now as parents you are urging on in the same direction. Marriages for daughters, no matter what or how; places for sons, that they may rise in society, no matter what or how; a mercantile establishment, an office under Government, a commission in the Army; all for the world: nothing said or taught bearing on the soul. Forgetting that your child is heir of an immortality in which you and he will hereafter confront each other, and may have to charge each other with mutual neglect of the highest aim of life, you are content yourself, and you are urging him to be content, with the mere husks which the swine of this world feed upon, while Heaven is lost. You would not bear anything dishonourable or anything not respectable. You would desire information, and accomplishments, good manners, and general knowledge, but it would not form any part of your idea of education that the soul is to live for ever. Hence spring up, all around us, the immense class of men and women who fill our streets, our shops, our offices, who throng us all around even in the aristocracy and higher orders, utterly godless, ignorant, and immoral. As we have

brought them up as children solely for the world, as men and women they live solely for the world; and they are propagating another generation which shall be worse even than themselves. You meet them everywhere. In outward things they are ordinary men; respectable, decent, well-behaved, eager, and zealous; hardworking, punctual in business, exact to engagements; but they have not the slightest knowledge that there is another work awaiting them, perfectly different from this—a work in which all the education which they have received goes for nothing. Jesus Christ calls upon them; the Word of God calls upon them; this Mission now throughout London calls upon them. There is a vineyard to work in, they are told now; but they have never heard of it before as in any way applicable to *them*. They have never been trained to think of it in this light. What does it mean? And so it is but really fair to allow them the benefit of the answer, "No man hath hired us."

There is another class of persons, who in equal justice we must allow to plead the same plea. They are these: persons whose idea of religion and of the Church is wrapped up in a theory of "Justification by Faith." Of course, there is no other meritorious cause of salvation than the Cross of Jesus. Christianity is based on that doctrine. Without the Atonement, and the Intercession of the Son of man in Heaven, no work of ours could hold any merit or plead any justification. But these men rest upon the

idea that they have only to dwell with a complacent satisfaction *subjectively* on the cross of Jesus which has purchased salvation for them—and then salvation follows. With the work of salvation personally, as a work, they have nothing to do.

But consider. What is this salvation of which we speak as the result of entering the vineyard, and what is the vineyard into which Jesus calls us? Is the vineyard described in the parable as a place in which the labourers, having entered, are to go to sleep and awake up after a certain time with a reward all ready, exclusive of themselves? On the contrary: by the rebuke, "Why stand ye here *idle?*" and the term by which they are designated, "*labourers*," is sufficiently shown that work is expected of them. And consider again. The Church into which we are called is of two parts—the visible and the invisible. The vineyard represents the visible part, that which is on earth—the invisible part remains after we have passed out of the vineyard, represented by the reward or hire paid to the labourers. To speculate then upon the glories, the rewards, and the blessings of Heaven (the invisible Church, which we are to enjoy hereafter) without having done any work in the visible Church here, preparatory for it, is but a foolish dream. You see this in the parable. The householder has his reward (his pay) for the labourers *ready*, a penny a day; but they are not to have it unless they work.

The labourers are (before they are hired) outside, in the outer, common world. They know nothing of the vineyard. When they *do* know of it, they go in, they work, and then at the end, when the day comes to its termination, they receive every man a penny. This penny which they receive is the reward given to the righteous in the Invisible Church when work is over; but the work to be done is in the Visible Church while life remains.

To those who cry out that we are saved by faith, and not by works, and therefore all that a man has to do is to recite his Creed, feel his faith, or say his prayers, I answer with S. James, "Show me thy faith without thy works, and I will show thee my faith by my works." And I reply also by other parables of our Blessed Lord, such as the talents and the pounds, wherein the unprofitable servant is cast out into outer darkness, not because he has done anything violently opposed to his master, but because he does not *work*. He is useless—he has not done anything for God—he is "unprofitable."

But men do not understand this. There they sit in indolent inactivity, imagining that by going to prayers once on Sunday and hearing a sermon; by an outward conformity to the ordinances of the Church, so as not to offend; by reading a chapter in the Bible, by sighing over a tale of distress, by lamenting the iniquity of the world, by a sentimental sorrow at the sins of men, and by a righteous indig-

nation against the frailty of women; by a subscription of alms given in the superfluity of that which they never miss; and by crying out, "Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners," then they shall pass easily into the kingdom of heaven and sit among the thrones of the saints.

These, then, form another set of men who in reality are not yet "hired." First, they do not know that they ought to work; and Secondly, they do not know what the work is. Jesus says to them, "You have done no work yet for me: you are dreaming that my religion is an easy one, so easy that you need take no trouble about it. You are imagining that I do not need to receive from you more than professions, or behold in you more than feelings. Let me undeceive you. I, as the householder, have my penny ready, but it will be given only after the day's work. Behold *Me*, how in the flesh I was ever at work; how I was on the mountain top, praying, and in the wilderness, working miracles. Ask the sick, the blind, the lame, the dying. Was I not always at their side when they wanted Me, taking long journeys to comfort them, and never sparing Myself if I could do them good? My Apostle sums it all up—"Pure religion, and undefiled, before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and the widow in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world."

Thus, then, my brethren, in charitable allowance for the failings and infirmities of man, we concede

that there may be in many, through want of opportunity, or through a mistaken sense of what religion is, an excuse which Almighty God may in His mercy accept: they have not yet been "hired." But are things to remain always so? You observe in the parable how many different times the householder comes to hire the labourers. It is not once, but many times. "Early in the morning," the "third hour," "sixth," "ninth," and lastly at the "eleventh hour"—and then at the last time (not until the last time, observe *that*) the expression is used, "Why stand ye here all the day idle?"

Now let us apply it. At this very moment there stands before me the market-place of the world, and there stand before me all the different hours, and there is the vineyard proposed to all: but not the vineyard without the labour, nor the labour without the hiring. Shall I take the early morning? Youth; the very beginning of life. These boys of the choir; young lads and girls that have just made their first Communion: Jesus says to them, "Come and work in My vineyard, and whatsoever is right I will give you." Do you say, "No, I cannot work; I can do no good; I am too young?" Jesus says, "I would not have asked you had I thought you could do no good. By the very fact of my asking you, I show you that you can do good. I am ready to hire you; will you come?"

Shall I take early manhood and womanhood, when the world, the flesh, and the devil begin to

have such hold upon our nature? It is represented in the third and sixth hours. What do you say? Have you your pleasures, your lusts of the flesh, your sports of the field, your merry-makings, your banquetings and revellings? Or have you the studies of ambition, and the making your way in the world? the desk at which you plod all day, the lamp by which you toil all night? And so with one thing or another, this beautiful time of God's blessing to you is all for self, and nothing for the vineyard?

Or suppose we pass over these hours and come to the ninth hour—middle age, mature life, with all the faculties of the mind and experiences of the world developed, defined, and certain. "Will not you," saith Jesus, "come to work in my vineyard?" Now take care how you say, "No, I cannot." Take care how you say, "See how much I have to do; see my cares and anxieties; see my business or trade; see my children, husband, wife; see my office, my bank, my politics, my civil duties, my social duties." Take care, my brethren, how you say anything of that kind. You may retain, and love, and cling to these things which you bring as your excuse. You may do so if you like. God does not forcibly take them from you; but then the vineyard is gone; the penny is lost. "Labour for the meat which perisheth" you may; but then you cannot have the meat which endureth unto everlasting life" also. Jesus calls to you, "I have a

Church; I have many thousands of souls in that Church; I have many thousands of works in that Church corresponding. For the constitution of it, and for the working of it in all its different parts, I have need of help. As I Myself did, so have I need of My servants to do. I have need of priests to minister at My Altars, and preach My Word; of masters and teachers who shall train My children; of pastors who shall go in and out and feed My sheep; of holy brothers joining in guilds to help and sustain the poor; of holy sisters who shall join together to nurse the sick and tend the babes—indeed, where have I not need of My people to help My people. On all sides; in every village, on the road-side, in every street and alley, in every hedge-row and byway path; in every place of misery, that it may be comforted; of poverty, that it may be alleviated; in every place of sin, that it may be checked and admonished; in every place of penitence, that it may be brought back to Me, that I may pour forth My mercy, even as was prophesied. "He hath sent Me to preach the Gospel to the poor, to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord."

This is the vineyard, and this is the work. Many of you, my brethren, have not joined in its work yet. You say you have not been "hired." The early morning has passed; the third, sixth, ninth

hours have passed, and yet you have done no work in it, and that because you say no man hath hired you. Well then, now is the eleventh hour, and still once more (it may be for the last time) the householder comes; once more He asks you, "Go work in My vineyard; once more He charges you, and says, "Why stand ye here all the day idle?" You cannot say "no man has hired us" *now*. You cannot say no prophet has been to you, no warning has reached you, no voice, like that of Nathan to David, has said to you, "Thou art the man." For it is spoken to you to night. The voice says—now, in the eleventh hour, the voice says—"Go into the vineyard." Forsake some of your own work, and do God's; sacrifice something of your own will, and study God's. A few of those many hours, dedicated hitherto to the work of mammon and of the world, give to the Church. Up to this time you have been altogether engaged, absorbed, pre-occupied with that which you had mistakenly thought the chief thing, that is, your worldly prospects. Now let that self-deception be cleared away, and hear the voice of Jesus pleading for His Church. He makes His Church Himself. He makes the poor, the penitent sinners, the miserable, the forlorn, the destitute, the naked, the starving, and hungry—he makes them all Himself. And now he says to you at the eleventh hour, "Come work in My vineyard: My vineyard is Myself, so I love it, so I identify myself with it,—that is Myself."

"I am an hungered, come and give Me meat; I am thirsty, come and give Me drink; I am a stranger, take Me in; I am naked, clothe Me; I am sick, visit me; I am in prison, come unto Me."

Now then, my brethren, however lenient I may be to you in the past, however I may grant your plea up to this time, that you have not been hired; yet the utmost strain of my charity cannot allow me to grant your plea any longer. What is this Mission? Is it not your hiring? What am I, with all the other priests sent here in this Mission for, but your call? Is your conscience struck; is your mind arrested; is your common reasoning power convinced that what has been, and is now at this moment being delivered to you from this pulpit, is a *call?* I do not say here only—but all through London, (for may be you have attended other Mission Churches besides this,) I say all through London—This whole thing,—this awakening of the soul to see its responsibility,—this stirring up of the dregs of the caldron of sin, so as to boil up and boil over with the hideousness of lost souls,—the opening of a hundred churches for daily intercession, by the Blessed Sacrament of the Son of God,—the prayers, the preaching, the struggling of sinners with sin, the confessions poured forth in the exuberance of contrition, souls who never made confession before now flocking in, as they did to S. John Baptist in the wilderness—to you, my brethren, who still hold aloof in the deadness of your faith, still cold, still chill,

still unconvinced, still teeming with the unconcern of apathy, the haughtiness of pride, the sensitiveness of shame, or the stiffness of prejudice; to you, the remnant standing there, at this eleventh hour I ask—"Are you not by this very sight, and by this knowledge, at any rate *now* hired? You have had your excuse hitherto. No one ever spoke to you before. You never heard before of Confession, or of Self-examination, or of Eternal death for sin except you receive forgiveness here on earth; or at any rate, if any preacher has spoken, it was not in such a way as this. I grant your plea; but what will you say *now*? It is hard to kick against the pricks. Why not be converted as S. Paul was. Jesus is now waiting at the door, and knocking. He has knocked, He does knock, He wants to come in. He has called you, He calls you *now*. He searches the very reins and heart; He bids you arise and go with Him, and He will show you wonderful things; and He says, Come to Me in the representative of My Priesthood and lift up your souls; come to Me; come to My vineyard, and I will give you work; come buy of Me My treasures "without money and without price;" come to Me and I will redeem you from all sin. "Awake, arise, or be for ever fallen."

Now I know, dear brethren, that some of you have felt this call. You do feel that you are hired; your conscience tells you that you are. But I know also that there are some who feel it not, some who have never come into this Church or any other Church

of the Mission since it began; who have studiously kept aloof from it, on the principle of Ahab to Micaiah, because they hate the prophets who will not speak smooth words to them. These men will still go to their clubs, their politics, their sensualities, and their sins, as though this Mission had never been. What will be the end of such as these I cannot tell; I dare not think. Only like Pharaoh or like Judas, with every grace of God before them they seem rushing doggedly to their appointed end.

Bnt you, my dear brethren, that are here now, oh, let me call you yet once more while you are in the reach of God's voice. Let me entreat you by the love of God's long-suffering mercy; by the plea of Jesus Who died for your sins; by the comfort of the Holy Ghost, Who is to cheer your soiled face and save you, through the Blood of the Lamb of God; do not answer "No man hath hired me." You cannot truly make that answer now, for this is your hiring day. At whatsoever hour it be, no matter, to each it is the hiring day; to each it is the call of God.

I say then to you, my dear boys of the choir, and all the children, however young you may be, who have come hither in this Mission for your catechising, this is your call—take care of your answer. I say to you, my dear young men and women, hasting with too ready feet to the ball room, to the race course, or to Belshazzar's feast, this is your call—take care of your answer. I say to you also, my dear brethren

in Christ, who have formed the instruction classes, and who have learned I hope with God's blessing the practical duties of life, to you, in those specific points of your teaching, this is your call—take care of your answer. I say to you of the more promiscuous congregation, in more mature age, with God's loving Hand upon you in the blessings of a prosperous business, a rising profession, or an hereditary fortune, here is your call; you are asked to arise from the dangers of such unalloyed smoothness, and take upon you in almsgiving, in prayer, and in fasting, the sterner duties of a soldier of Jesus Christ. Oh do not let your life pass onwards to the grave, reposing in your drawing-rooms, riding in your carriages, and walking on your lawns of velvet; but come forth to your work in the vineyard, and behold it in the hospitals, the prisons, the sick room, and the penitentiary; this is your call—take care of your answer. Or lastly, if you be even in the eleventh hour aged and infirm, and incapable of this, at least there is almsgiving and prayer. Almsgiving in pouring forth of your abundance into the bosom of the Church. Why keep all that hoard of money locked up safely for self? Why not give it for the houses of God, to build; to schools for the poor, to maintain; for priests and bishops of God, to endow, and send forth among the heathen. Give back to God at least your tenth. This is your call—take care of the answer.

It is the marriage feast, and you are called. It

is the vineyard, and you are called. Take care lest Almighty God, having thus mercifully called you, while you of every degree of life, still reject Him, He be at last compelled on His own part to reject you also; and the next Mission that He may put into the hearts of His priests to send, He may pass over this parish altogether, nay, over this whole city, with its terrible wickedness, even as Sodom and Gomorrah; and go forth into the highways and hedges of Australia and New Zealand, or the sands of Africa, leaving the Church of England, as He did the Churches of Asia—her light put out, her candlestick withdrawn.

God hath called you now; it may be for the last time—the eleventh hour. The gates of the vineyard are open before you, the watchman in the tower is looking for you, the wine-press is waiting for the fruit. Oh, let it not be said by Almighty God as was said in the prophet Isaiah, "What could have been done for my vineyard that I have not done for it? Wherefore, then, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes?"

TENTH DAY OF THE MISSION.

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 23, 1869.

The Work.

S. John ix. 4.

"I MUST WORK THE WORKS OF HIM THAT SENT ME."

Sermon X.

THE WORK.

It is agreed that we ought not to "stand idle all the day." It is agreed that the householder of the vineyard has given us an invitation to work. "He hath hired us." It is agreed that it is our duty to accept that invitation at whatever hour it may have come to us, and since it *has* come to us, we must go into the vineyard and work. And of course the first thing we do after this is to look about and see what the work is.

I must begin by describing it in general terms, and then draw it down closer and closer in the details which will be needed for its explanation.

First, then, in general terms, the work is this: The advancement of the soul by means of the Church, and the advancement of the Church in order that by the Church souls may be saved. Observe the prayer which our Blessed Lord puts into our mouths the very first moment we become His disciples—"Thy kingdom come." The kingdom is the Church. We pray that it may advance, extend, be enlarged, glorified, conquer its enemies, overcome all that is opposed to it, and finally triumph. The fulfilment of this prayer is the work which we have to do.

But why is God's kingdom interpreted to mean His Church? Some might say it means Religion, Faith, Holiness, something abstract, and not necessarily that external body which we call the Church. But let us look to the Acts of the Apostles, and we shall there see how this "kingdom," described by our Lord in His prayer, is fulfilled in point of fact in the history of the Church. The Holy Ghost descended, the twelve went forth, work began, conversions took place, and then it is said "the Lord added to the Church daily such as should be saved." This is exactly paralleled with the "vineyard" in the parable, and the "kingdom" in the prayer. All the souls whom God called in to be saved, were called into that external body, constituted, ordained, disciplined, and blessed under the government of the Apostles. When, therefore, we say that our work is to save souls, and we understand that there is no other way for souls to be saved than by entering into the Church, our work for the Church becomes identical with the saving of souls.

And again, there must be only one single object or end in view in undertaking this work. It must be for the glory of God. If any partizan feeling, or personal desire of triumph, or selfish advantage be mixed up with what we do, the work is deteriorated, if not lost. The glory of God must be alone before us; hence the saving of souls becomes identical with the glory of God. They both mean the same thing in reality; for the glory of God (to us) cannot exist

unless souls are saved, and on the other hand, every soul that is saved tends to the glory of God by the very fact of being saved. But I want to distinguish them for the present, because the details of their work are various.

Take, then, the glory of God. In this there are three great duties—prayer, almsdeeds, and fasting, specially mentioned by our Lord in the Sermon on the Mount. All the works which ramify and extend out of these, such as building churches, making God's house beautiful, constant and faithful adoration of His name, singing His praises, attending His sacraments, self-denial that we may have the more to give, both to Him and to His poor—all these, and such like, I now put aside, because it is not my object to press them. All that are here present at this moment are (at least most are) aware of these works as forming a necessary part of religion. You may not perhaps perform them well, you may have grievously fallen short in many of them, but you *know* of them. It is not from ignorance of the general rule of Christians that you fail in them—they are well-known and recognised duties.

I leave them, therefore, for the present, and come to the second portion of the work: "The saving of souls."

Here it may be said, "Saving of souls! That is not our business. It is the work of God's ministers—His bishops and priests sent forth for this very pur-

pose. It is the office which the pastor of the flock is hired specially to do, as his peculiar and proper vocation." Of course the saving of souls is primarily the priest's office. He is in every parish, as the bishop is in every diocese, the fountain-spring, flowing down from Christ Jesus, the great head of the Church, to water the valleys of this great vineyard of souls. It is true also that some things towards saving of souls the priest alone can do—as all the sacraments (except only one, which for salvation's sake, in cases of necessity, the Church allows laymen—nay, not only allows, but calls upon them to perform, *i.e.*, Baptism); but generally the sacraments—hearing confessions, celebrating and offering the Holy Sacrifice, confirmation, ordination—these works are peculiarly and solely sacerdotal, and cannot be performed by laymen. But under them and subsidiary to them—preparing towards them, teaching and gathering in souls to receive them, going out into the highways and hedges to look for the lost to "compel them to come in"—these works are yours, my brethren, just as much as ours. You are called upon to be fellow-helpers in them, and to work with us for them.

While then it is true that only to the apostles, and their successors by apostolic ordination, the government of souls in the discipline of the Church is confided; still, in the furtherance of this discipline every man, woman, and child has his own responsi-

bility. True, it is only to the apostles and their successors that our Lord entrusts the "keys," and says, "Whosesoever sins ye remit, they are remitted; and whosesoever sins ye retain, they are retained." But then, such is the peculiar efficacy of the Christian vocation, that every baptized man, merely as being called of God, (provided only sanctity of life verifies the call), every baptized man is in a certain sense a priest to God. Remember what S. Peter says—as distinguishing Christians, merely as Christians, from other men—"Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood;" and S. John, in the Book of Revelation, says that Jesus "hath made us all," every one of us, "Kings and priests unto God and His Father;" and besides, in the great Day of Judgment, when all mankind shall stand before His bar to be questioned of deeds done in the flesh—deeds done by those who have been called into His vineyard—it is not to priests only, in their sacerdotal office, but to every one according to their several responsibilities, that the questions will be put, which you well know, in the twenty-fifth chapter of S. Matthew, "I was an hungred, I was thirsty, a stranger, naked, sick, in prison—and ye visited me not,"—all which is summed up spiritually in this terrible judgment, which, if you have done no work, will be decided against you. The judgment will be this—"Those that were hungring and thirsting after right-righteousness you have not fed with the bread

which came down from heaven; the naked in their sins you have not clothed in the garments of Jesus; the stranger of heathen lands you have not brought into the Church; the sick in faith you have left to pine away and die in ignorance; the prisoners bound in the heavy chains of Satan, you have lifted up no hand to unloose or deliver from sin."

Having, then, thus far cleared the ground, and finding that our work is, for laymen as well as priests, the saving of souls; it follows that—whatever impediments there are in its way—our first business is to remove those impediments, just as the pioneers are sent forward to clear the road for the army to advance.

Now the chief and leading hindrance to the saving of souls is ignorance. Here then does our work begin. Our Blessed Lord describes Himself, His religion, His Gospel, all that belongs to Him, as "Light:" light opposed to darkness, which is ignorance. He is announced as "The Light to lighten the Gentiles." He says Himself, "I am the Light of the World." S. John describes a wicked man as "stumbling, because he has no light in him." When the apostle urges us to holiness, he says, "Let us cast off the works of darkness, and put on the armour of light." The reason why the Jews did not receive Jesus as their Messiah, was the natural ignorance which enveloped them as in a cloud. "The Light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehendeth it not."

My brethren, there is among us now, at the very present moment—although it is the nineteenth century—not only among the poor, but among the whole of society—very nearly the same ignorance as there was then. We are all apt to think and judge of affairs by the circumstances immediately surrounding us; and therefore because you are well educated in the world, and can boast of a certain acquaintance with science and literature; and because among your own immediate friends, and those with whom you associate, you find a tolerable degree of knowledge and information in secular matters; you conclude that, there must be the same in spiritual matters. But, in good truth, if you will bear with me in saying so, the ignorance displayed by most, even of the highest rank, and such even as dwell in this aristocratic neighbourhood, is appalling—ignorance of Church history, of religious customs, of ecclesiastical discipline, of rules of faith, the creeds, doctrines, and sacraments, founded upon Catholicity, and by which all good Catholics are bound. Men of the world, otherwise very well read, have never made any study of the Church. Lawyers, statesmen, and jurists, very well able to give judgment in the Court of Common Pleas, or the Queen's Bench, have never even dipped accidentally into the study of theology; and the ministers of the Crown who preside over the Church by law established, deal with her by that power only to which they have access—the law of Protestantism and their own will.

And this is the reason why so many things go wrong, and why we are continually thrust into incompetent courts of laws, and judgments are given which are simply puerile. Learned judges deliver themselves only to show that they are unaware of that great power which is altogether above and out of their sight—the Church as distinct from law. Prejudice takes the place of knowledge even in them; and truth is barred out by political necessity.

And then as to the poor. The absence of all dogmatic teaching in dissenters poisons and neutralizes that which the Church has to give; and dense ignorance of all religion among the great bulk of the poor and working classes is the result. They absolutely know nothing. I have met with grown-up men and women, unacquainted even with the Name of Jesus, even with the historical fact of His existence. I once stood at a shop window behind some boys looking at sacred pictures in an engraver's shop, and I heard one say to the other, in astonishment, "Why, look here, here is a naked man!" It was Jesus on the cross, and the poor boys knew not of it; knew not even of the bare fact that Jesus was crucified.

Then as to the Church. That there is or can be any difference between the Church and dissent as an instrument of saving souls; the popular idea is that the one is as good as the other. It is not that men take up dissent and go to meeting-houses on conscientious scruples, but because they know of no

virtue in the Church; many acknowledging that they frequent both, and not only one kind of dissent but many at the same time. Of course this can only arise from ignorance. Such men as Calamy, Neale, Baxter, and in later times Wesley, had indeed distinct grounds upon which they followed their several unhappy schisms; they were wrong and misled; but they were not ignorant. But the bulk of our people are really, (I must speak the truth,) neither one thing nor another. It is accident, or the personal interest of the moment, the master whom they serve, or the business which they follow, which will carry them hither and thither, as chance directs. I know some who have followed four different kinds of dissent within a very few years; they are like waves of the sea, tossed about, wavering, unsteady, without any principle or ballast. Did you ever see upon the Atlantic Ocean a ship, as seamen describe it, "water logged"—a helpless log driven hither and thither by every gust of wind, incapable of guidance? Did you ever see a drunken man wandering in his horrid sin along the streets, his reason, his mind, his whole intellectual being gone? David gives us these figures, "They are carried up to Heaven and down again to the deep; they reel to and fro like a drunken man." Even so are thousands of the poorer classes at this present time. Dissenters one day, what they call "Churchmen" another day. The ignorance which is manifested in this is clearly the destruction of souls. It is not for party spirit that I

say this, or because of jealousy that dissent prevails in so many quarters, but for the sake of men's souls. What religion, faith, knowledge of God, or consistency of principle, can there be in a man's soul, who, knows no difference between the grand, solid substantial basis of the Catholic Church, which has come down to us from the Apostles, and the mere preaching house of men, which a few hundred years ago, had no existence at all ?

Here, then, my brethren, is your first work. Look to yourselves, your children, your families; how are you, how are they, being taught ? Is it for the accomplishments of the world, or for the Church ? Is the Church by which alone they can be saved, made to you and to them paramount and all important? I do not mean the Church *Establishment*—that belongs to the Prime Minister; but the Church of Jesus—the Catholic Church of our dear Lord. Do you or they understand *that ?*

And for the poor. Look to your Parish Schools with the same idea. Not Government schools, not secular-knowledge schools, with conscience clauses, and other schemes by which the faith of Jesus shall be obliterated—but Church schools, schools under the teaching of the parish priest. Your work must be to help the priest, to gather in the little ones, and give them to him; to strengthen him by your co-operation, your sympathy, and your alms; in procuring schoolmasters, and teachers of the right kind; and, if you are competent, to become teachers

yourselves. Gather in the fish of all kinds, out of the sea, into the net, and when you have got them there, train them—not so much in secular learning, though that of course in part,—but spiritual learning, moral learning, that they may be instructed "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord," that they may "from a child," with Timothy, "know the Holy Scriptures," and so when grown up, may, "knowing the reason of the faith that is in them," be defended against the wiles of the devil, and become good, and substantial, and trustworthy, and steady soldiers of Jesus Christ.

The next great hindrance and impediment to the saving of souls is Sin. You would think that I should have put that first. No. Because Sin is the product and daughter of Ignorance. I do not mean that there is no sin without ignorance; for alas! the most enlightened, the most wise in worldly wisdom, the most skilled in science have fallen—as David and Solomon, into grievous sins against God.

But I do not now speak of accidental sin. The casual overcomings of Satan, into which we all more or less daily fall, are to be dealt with in the sacraments, and those who submit themselves to the offices of the Church, know how to deal with them; but I speak of habitual sinners, "reprobate" sinners, those whose whole life does nothing but deny the Holy Ghost, and everything sacramental or religious that belongs to Him; persons, for instance, who never by any chance enter God's house, or any

other place of worship; persons living in habitual drunkenness, fornication, prostitution, adultery, open blasphemers, violent outlaws against everything of divine obligation or human respectability. Now these I must set down either as children of the devil or of ignorance. If they are of the former class (for when I look sometimes at the unmeaning wickedness of men, so peculiar, so contradicting common sense, I can account for it in no other way but that Satan has bodily taken possession of them) if, I say, they are really possessed with an evil spirit, then it is our (the priests) work, by prayer, by the Blessed Sacrament as a means of mediation on their behalf, to exorcise them, to cast out the evil spirit by Jesus our Lord; but, on the other hand, if we find it the product of ignorance, a sheer habit of the body or the mind, destitute of the light of any Gospel, any Saviour, any Church, there is your work again, as laymen, to teach. There are thousands whom we know, in our streets, whose houses and haunts we see, whose souls would be, if God were to cut them off (and He sometimes does) in the midst of all their sin, certain of eternal damnation. I say, my dear brethren, are we to sit here, fold our hands, and leave them alone? What the prophet Ezekiel says to us, as priests, whose duty is to warn the wicked, he also says in proportion to every Christian man who sees a sinner perishing, and takes no trouble to save him. This is what he says: "When I say unto the wicked thou shalt

surely die, and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way to save his life, the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity, but his blood will I require at thy hand." God makes us responsible if we do not try to save souls.

Look at our great towns, look at this which concerns us most nearly—this metropolis, your own parish, even this. I could take you to streets where house after house is a den of iniquity; and with the iniquity poverty, and wretchedness, and debased natures of the most loathsome kind; streets wherein thieving is taught by grown-up proficients to little boys and girls as a profession. Thieving, cursing, swearing, and fleshly abominations of every kind are practised by tender boys and girls, who, you would think, could hardly know what sin is; and sin thus becomes an ingrained principle of their vitality. Their life is sin, their breath is sin, they never see or know anything else but sin. Both the teacher and the taught—men, women, boys, and girls—all in one trade, practice, and profession of sin, making their daily bread by it: and they perhaps having once received the gift of the Holy Ghost in Baptism. But alas! oh misery, that Satan should so triumph; not a sign left, not a spark visible of the light of God; but brands burning too clearly in the fire of hell while here even yet upon earth. And, my dear brethren, do not imagine that sin, as I thus describe it, is confined to the poor, neither be carried away

by a fond idea that you, here, in this wealthy and enlightened Belgravia, have no part or share in it. You pretend to be, and perhaps are, horrified by the accounts which you read every day in the police courts, because it is only the poor that are there brought forth into the blaze of light, *detected;* but the rich—you, my brethren, to whom I speak, as a class, the rich have, though *undetected* the same sins. The very same evil haunts, the very same gambling houses (hells, they are called), the same places of prostitution and horrible iniquity, of every kind, are yours as well as of the poor—nay, perhaps you by your very riches have tended to found them, and now continue by sin to maintain them.

Do not be startled at these things which I now openly say to you. Remember it is a Mission, and a Mission as I said before, to you as the rich. There is difference only in this, that the sins of the poor are more coarse, yours more refined. You are, by your riches, enabled to throw a cloak over what you are; but then that places you only in a greater danger, and verifies what our Blessed Lord says—that it "is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven."

Therefore, I say, are we to leave this dreadful state of foul, putrifying, fermenting wickedness alone? Are we to content ourselves with *preaching* about it? declaiming about it? making statistics about it? writing pamphlets about it? Ought we

not to rush into the midst of the enemy and fight him? ought we not to be cut to the heart, and grieve to see all these souls "perishing for whom Christ died." S. James says, "Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth and one convert him, let him know that he who converteth the sinner from the error of his way, shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins."

Thus have we advanced a stage further. *The work is before us.*

The next question is the *means* by which it is to be done. I have spoken as yet solely of a *spiritual* work. It is a spiritual work to teach the ignorant, and of course it is a spiritual work to reclaim a soul that is lost in any sin. Now this spiritual work Jesus came to do in His own Divine Person—"I must work the works of Him that sent Me," and it is said specially that "He came into the world to save sinners." It was to subdue the devil in his strongholds, to eradicate and subvert his power over the hearts of men, to lead captivity captive, to let those who were bound in the chains of his slavery, go free. This was the work that Jesus came to do. It was entirely spiritual—it regarded the soul. But what were the means that He used towards the end He had in view? Did He enter men's houses, follow them into the temple, go upon the house-tops and proclaim abstract truths of science or theology? Or was either His philosophy or His Divinity set forth in dry disquisitions or learned treatises by

which He might convince the reason, or cultivate merely the intellectual powers of men? No. It was the heart that He always tried to reach, the affections that He sought to win, the goodness of love that He desired to create; and therefore it ever was through temporal blessings that He gained for men their spiritual salvation. This is the key to the miracles which our Blessed Lord performed. You will trace it in all covertly, in some directly. For instance, He says to the impotent man at the pool of Bethesda, "You need not be anxious about that temporal healing. I will give you that; but in it I will give you more." He (the impotent man) learns in the temporal cure that it is Jesus who had spoken. He says to the widow's son, "Young man, I say unto thee, arise." In the arising from temporal death he learns a spiritual resurrection. He says to the leper, "I will, be thou clean." By the bodily cleanliness, He achieves the purification of the soul. He says to the demoniac, "Thou deaf and dumb spirit, I charge thee, come out of him." But along with it came out obstinacy and hardness of heart. In some cases it is immediate and direct, —as to the sick of the palsy, let down through the roof of the house, He foregoes the temporal healing, and says at once, "Thy sins be forgiven thee." And thus ever winning the souls of men He is described as "going about doing good"—*i.e.*, doing good to their bodies—healing their sicknesses, bearing their infirmities, sympathizing with their sor-

rows. "The common people heard Him gladly," because He was ready to attend to their wants. He "taught with authority and not as the scribes, because He did not keep aloof in pride, but "sat down to meat with publicans and sinners." He did not excel in letters or learning (on one occasion it was remarked in wonder that He never learned); His learning was in the knowledge of the heart, which knowledge He acquired (speaking humanly) by taking part in their griefs and sorrows; as, for instance, "weeping at the tomb of Lazarus"—and sharing their joys, as, for instance, His first miracle, turning water into wine at a marriage feast.

Now then, my brethren, you see your means to the same end. Some persons go about the streets of the poor, and leave a *Tract* at the door. Inasmuch as a tract does not do any good to the body, it saves no soul. I never knew a sinner converted by a tract. S. James says, "If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, and one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled, notwithstanding ye give them not those things which be needful to the body, what doth it profit." It is through the practical, tangible, visible good works of man to man; human soul to human soul; speaking in sympathy, in fellow feeling; joining in the cares and sufferings and difficulties of our earthly state; and then, appealing from the infirmities of man up to the perfection and glory of God; even as Jesus Himself "Incarnate," came

down from heaven, took share with us of all our sorrows, and then (mediating between us and God the Father) leads us back to the Paradise, which but for Him we had lost for ever.

The way to win lost souls to Christ is to change places with them. You see the ignorance, the sorrows, the wants, the miseries of man. They are all brought together—combined, involved, proceeding the one out of the other, and all from sin. How is it that you are preserved from what you see and abhor in others? They are degraded, miserable, outcasts of society. Why are you (if indeed it be so) honourable, happy, and raised up in the world? No merit of yours. Why are you—you, the child of the prince or the noble—why are you not that ragged, ill-conditioned child, from whom you turn in disdain as he meets you in the street? No merit of yours. Why are you—you the fine lady, dwelling in the midst of luxury, courted of men, the adulation of the world—why are you not as that courtezan whom you would shrink from touching because of sin? No merit of yours; for a little change of circumstance would have made you the very same. Why are you not—you the honoured and respected, the learned and the great, sitting in the ermine of the judge, or clothed in the vestments of the priest—why are you not that degraded wretch who begs from door to door, steals and cheats, swears and drinks, without a hope beyond an escape from the starvation of a day? Or why are you not the sensual profligate, who

defies the Holy Ghost daily in word and deed—or why are you not that miserable convict, sentenced to death to satisfy the justice of human laws—why, I repeat, are you not in their places? but rather come here (as to night) clothed in decent garments, dwelling in a comfortable house, your table well supplied with daily food, and all things round about you cheerful and happy; brought here to-night to enjoy all the privileges and blessings of public worship, a beautiful church, reverential services, glad psalmody, with an intelligent mind and habits of devotion—thus preparing yourself, with God's grace, for a place in His heavenly kingdom, when in His own good time He shall call you hence. I repeat again, Why all this difference? No merit of yours.

Or, think again. You are now respectable in life, perhaps have no great sins, can conscientiously say, in the ordinary language of men, that at any rate you are not living in any mortal sin. But has it always been so? You are an old man, or a middle-aged man; the follies and lusts of youth are gone, you are sobered and steadied down into a grave decency of a generally religious and moral character. But it was not always so. Remember the sins of your youth. There have been sins; sins, in the midst of which if God had called you, without giving you the time He *has* given you for the repentance which you plead, you yourself would now have been in hell-fire. There is not a hair's breadth between life and hell to a man living in mortal sin; and so I say, a man

cut off in the midst of sin must be in hell fire. So Jesus says. Therefore you might have been that man. To whose mercy do you owe it, that you are not? Oh then, think of that mercy, and thinking of it, try to gain it for others, try to gain it for those that are now (or may be next week) in the very peril from which you have escaped. Try, having received it for yourself, to gain it for them. Look out for some one who is now sinning in the very way you once sinned—"Snatch him as a firebrand out of the fire." Give him your experience; show him the treasure you have gained; expatiate on the spiritual joy you now feel in being a penitent and a religious man, and prove to him that it is no gain, no real gain, were he to gain the whole world and lose his own soul. "God is Love," and "he that saith, he loves God, and hateth his brother, is a liar, and the truth is not in him." So saith Jesus Christ. Pray then for love (if you have it not), pray for a softened heart, that shall be loosed from the selfishness of nature; pray for such love as Jesus has manifested for you—"Greater love hath no man than this, that he lay down his life for his friend." Ah, brethren, what a different world would ours be, if we had for each other such love as this! Hell would not be known. Satan would no more walk upon the earth, going to and fro in it; Paradise would begin at once, and we should see God even before we die; we should, while still we are sojourning on earth, realize "the Communion of Saints dwelling in heaven."

THE LAST DAY OF THE MISSION.

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 24, 1869.

Too Late.

S. Matt. xxv. 10.

"WHILE THEY WENT TO BUY, THE BRIDEGROOM CAME, AND THEY THAT WERE READY WENT IN TO THE MARRIAGE, AND THE DOOR WAS SHUT."

Sermon XI.

TOO LATE.

There is a common proverb among us, deep in its meaning, awful in the thoughts which it suggests, but being common, must have had ground upon which its acceptation rests. It is this, "*Hell is paved with good intentions.*"

The meaning evidently is, that the intentions of men, good in themselves as intentions, but not going further—good resolutions resting as good resolutions and not going further, are so plentiful, so common, that they may form the paving stones over so vast a place as hell—nay, more, that they are so short of any merit as merely intentions, that hell is the only place in which you will find any account of them. Not, my brethren, you will observe, not that forming a good intention is wrong; that would be absurd, because a good intention is the foundation upon which every good act afterwards developed must of necessity depend; but only this, that a good intention unfulfilled, is the wrong. It is that which fills hell with paving-stones; and simply for this reason, that every good intention, being put into the heart by the Holy Ghost, a

neglect to fulfil it, is more or less a "quenching of that Holy Ghost," and therefore must be sin.

Now you have had, as all know, a great mission among you, and God's holy word has been set before the people, inviting to repentance, conversion and newness of life. The means have been pointed out by which sinners may be saved, and however red their sins, they may yet be made "white as wool." This is the eleventh day in which we have been doing this, the eleventh day in which we have been occupied in earnest prayer, sacraments, preaching, catechizing of the young, and instructions for the mature, all tending, as we hope, towards the great end of bringing lost souls to God. Some, alas, in this neighbourhood, not many, but I know *some*, have never come near the Mission at all. They have not even condescended to take any notice of our invitation, they have (I do not say studiously) but somehow or other they have kept aloof. Of course, so circumstanced, there could have been no good intention arising out of the preaching of the Mission formed in *their* hearts. If any intention at all has passed across their minds, it was a bad one, an intention to reject the messengers of God as Ahab did Micaiah, hating them because they feared the preaching of no good concerning them but evil. These men are like the seed which the sower let fall by the wayside; the fowls of the air, *i.e.*, the evil spirits of the devil (our Lord's interpretation of the parable) took it all away, and they have had no

chance. We must be very sorry for them, we must grieve over them very much, and when we think of the rich treasures of God's grace which they may have lost, for who knows if they had come, but that God, through us as earthen vessels, might have spoken to them—we must pray for them the rather. But anyhow they are excluded from the position of those who have formed good intentions. Anything therefore that I now have to say, cannot possibly allude to *them*. They remain just as they were.

But there are many, praise be to God, many to whom such a remark does not apply. I address myself to them, *i.e.*, to those who have as constantly as they could, attended the Mission services; who have in the course of them, by this means or that, felt their hearts stirred within them, their slumbering consciences aroused, their minds set to think on subjects on which perhaps they never thought before; and have in consequence here or there as to some sin, or some characteristic habit, or ungodliness of life, or some grievous neglect of religious duties, or some violation of God's sacramental ordinances, been, as those were to whom S. Peter preached his first sermon, "pricked in their hearts" and have cried out, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" or, like the prodigal, brought to his right mind, have resolved within themselves, "I will arise and go to my Father, and I will say, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before Thee, and am no more worthy to be called Thy son." To these in their

various degrees and moods of a good intention, arising either from a consciousness of the truths which they have heard, or the impulse put into their hearts by the Holy Ghost, moving them to do something (which, however, as yet, they have not done),—it is to those, my brethren, of you who are in such a case that I speak my words to night. Oh, may you not be in the condition of that son who, when his father commanded him to go and do a certain work, said, "I go, Sir" (that was his intention), but he "went not."

There was a great marriage. According to the oriental custom, virgins, or as we call them now, bridesmaids, were to go forth to take part in this marriage. Burning lamps, signifying joy, were held in their hands as part of the ceremony. They all, starting equally together, took their lamps, but five of them (therefore called foolish) did not take sufficient oil with them. They had not calculated on the length of time which might elapse before the Bridegroom should come. All was very well for some time, but the lamps of the foolish virgins suddenly went out. There was a great bustle and confusion among them. What should they do? They asked of the *wise* to lend them some of their oil. No, said they, go for yourselves and buy some oil. They went—but as they were gone—lo, the Bridegroom came. The marriage ceremony went on in the appointed place within, and now, observe my dear brethren, "the door was shut." They cried

"Lord, Lord," but it was of no use, they could not be heard, the door was shut. They were too late.

Now these five virgins so shut out from the marriage had unquestionably very good intentions. They started on the same ground with the other five; their object, their resolution, their intention was clearly to take part in the marriage and to do honour to the Bridegroom. How do I know it was their intention? They took their lamps — that shows their intention. They went along the road with the others, and they slumbered and slept with the others, they conversed with the others, and when they found themselves in a difficulty they asked help of the others. All this shows the fullness and completeness of their intention. But they did not succeed in their intention or fulfil it.

What was the reason of that? Lamps they had — *i.e.*, all the outside furniture for what was required, but they had no oil—at least not sufficient oil—for their lamps went out, *i.e.*, the inward spirit, feeling, heart, vitality; the unction of the Holy Ghost; was not deeply seated in them, and so though the outside lamps did not fail, yet through this failure of the inward spirit all went wrong, and the good intention with which they began and which carried them on a certain way, failed them when it was required to be shewn in action.

Thus, my dear brethren, in you. It is possible, probable, that you have, in the invitation set before you in the past mission; in the preaching of God's

word which has been delivered to you; in the illustrations of your duty as Christian men which have been made; in the calls upon you to repent and amend and be converted and live unto Jesus and to Him alone;—I say it is very possible, nay, I am sure it must have been the case in some, that you said within yourselves, "Yes, I must do something, I really must; it will not do to go on thus in my sins any longer; I will arise and forsake those fleshly lusts which poison and pollute my body; I will no longer go on, as I am doing now, in acts of dishonesty in my business; I will no longer pursue, as I am doing now, the miserable world and its miserable ways, in silly, foolish, and ungodly pleasures; dress; unclean words; unclean actions; foolish talking and jesting "which are not convenient, *i.e.*, not suitable to my Christian calling;—I will not go on, as I am doing now, in a life which I perceive is altogether wrong; I will no longer suffer my religion to be of the low, earthly, worldly-minded character which I see it is; I feel my sins, my grievous sins, to be intolerable—they press upon me—they overwhelm me—"Why art thou cast down, O my soul, and why art thou so disquieted within me?" Yes, I will arise and confess my sins. I will do that which, as the light now beams upon me, I see is my duty. I will lead a new life.

Yes, my brethren, that intention was good, there could not be a better: you seized your lamp, you

went forth to meet the Bridegroom, you mingled among others who were doing the same thing as yourselves, and it was very good. Perhaps it is so now at this very moment; you are seizing your lamp and bearing it on high, you are intending everything that is right. But have you the oil wherewith your lamp shall burn? Is this only the impulse of a keen or sensitive disposition? Is it only the effect of momentary excitement? Is it only while you are under the pressure of external force or oratorical persuasiveness, "the dew of the morning, or early cloud which when the sun arises, passeth away?"—Ah, my brethren, if it be so, then having no oil, or not sufficient, no real unction of the Holy Ghost within you, no depth of principle, no Christian courage, no perseverance, no grandeur of submission of your will,—just when you are wanted the light goes out. What then is all that good resolution, at least, which *seemed* a good resolution? It is only one of the stones that have gone to pave hell.

This is very strong language, you say. Yes, my brethren, it is strong language. But am I not justified in using strong language—nay, should I not be guilty before God and Jesus Christ, Whose ambassador I am to you in this mission, if I did not caution you of the danger in which you stand, in the supposed case of intending to do a right thing and then failing to do it. Better not have made the good intention at all, than, having made it,

break down in the doing of it. The son who said to his father, "I will not go," and yet afterwards repented and went, did his duty, and was more pleasing to his father than the other, who said "I go, sir," and went not.

But follow me a little further. Let us see what was the result of the oilless lamps of the five foolish virgins. That result will amply show you that I am justified in what I say.

What was the result? In their confusion, just at the very time that they were wanted, the bridegroom came, and the door was shut. Why? They were too late. They had their lamps—they had prepared everything—all the appliances of their duty had been fulfilled. Some little trouble they had indeed in getting the oil, but still they had got it, and there they were at the door. It seemed as if all were right after all. No; all was not right. They were too late.

Oh, my brethren, this is the lesson which I wish to enforce upon you now, in this last sermon of the mission. The result of coming to attend it may have been that you have formed a tacit resolution in your mind to profit by it. You have intended, for instance, to abandon some sin, make your confession, and reform your life; but now I put it to you, Are you going to fulfil it? Each one in his degree where he has found deficiencies (is there any one who has not found them?)—each one in his degree where he has found places in his religion where he may

institute an advance or an improvement (is there any one who may not do so?) each one searching after the Holy Spirit in prayer, devotion, and sacraments, more nearly than he has yet been accustomed to do (is there any one who might not do so?)—has made a good intention, and having made this good intention, has received a call from God. If he now, after this appeal, breaks from it, what will be his case?

Repentance—abandoning a life of sin—what is called in popular language, "turning over a new leaf,"—how constantly this is said to be determined upon. Suppose this is your case now—or more specifically,—the Devil possessing you with some power which you cannot shake off, sins haunting you which you cannot abandon, your conscience overwhelmed, you determine in the terror of the moment to make confession, and you rise up to do it. As you hear me preaching, influenced by the Spirit of God, impressed by some thought, moved by some impulse, you are resolved. But when the time comes, as it will after the service is over, you will not have courage to do it. You defer it. You put it off. "Not yet," you say, "not yet." "By and by." "Next year." "After Christmas." "In Lent." But take care. It may be that some sickness or some accident may carry you out of this world before that time shall come, and then, as you appeal to God for mercy, He will be compelled to say in justice, "Too late."

You have heard now all that this mission has to

say, and perhaps you have attended in other churches where in the same manner the same truths have been enforced. Altogether and generally your mind may have been turned in a new direction. A course of life which has hitherto been pursued by you through ignorance of the truth, now appears to you in its true colours for the first time. Sins of selfish indulgence, carnal pleasures, the vanity of the world, start out before you, and in such colours as before you never saw them; and you resolve, you determine with yourself, now to arise and lead a new life. This is well, and all holds good while the impression is with you. But you go forth, after the mission is over, into the world. Old companions flock around you, the habits of former days recur, the fascinations of sin repossess you, and all the good of the mission disappears. And so you come some years hence to die. Then what will be your cry? "Oh, how I wish I had done as I once intended! Oh, that I had been more determined in that year 1869, during the mission, when I saw my folly and had it in my heart to amend. Now I come to Thee, O God; now I beseech Thee to take me into Thy kingdom. Now I beseech Thee . . . But the answer will come, as assuredly in justice it should, "*Too late.*"

You have a plea to make before a powerful king, dwelling in a country which lies at the head of a great river. The plea which you desire to make, and which you set forth on your journey *intending* to make, is of vital importance to you—you know it

is; if you do not make it, and succeed in it, all you have in the world, your profession, your friends, your very life will be forfeited, all will be lost. But the river up which you have to go, is a tidal river, you must reach it with the flood-tide, so as to go up with it. You know about this, and your *intention* is very good; you know that time and tide wait for no man, and so you press forward. But you meet with some one on the road who begins to talk—your mind is diverted from your intention, you forget what you were about, you wander, you hesitate, you linger. Alas! you have passed the hour, the tide has begun to ebb, you are *too late.*

Or, say again, you have a most dear friend, a mother, a father, a wife, a child—of whom news is brought to you that he is at the point of death at some distant place; you are pressed to look upon that dear one yet once more before he goes hence and is no more seen; your heart throbs all over with intense anxiety to be there. How earnest is your longing; how full and sincere in every way is your intention to be there; nothing better. But you loiter on the way, or you defer for an hour or two your departure from some trivial interruption, and so you arrive at the station. But the train has gone, you are "too late." You seize horses and carriage, you do all you can to make up for it, but a long night intervenes, which you never calculated upon. At last you do arrive, but what do you hear? The spirit of the dear one has just fled. You are *too late.*

Or, you are a soldier. The army is encamped and drawn up in lines ready for the battle. You are upon leave, absent from the army for a short time. But you are very anxious that, should there be a battle, you should be there to run its risks, and gain its honours as a good and brave soldier ought of course to do. Suddenly news arrives that the enemy is close, and a battle inevitably impending. But you are being amused in comfortable quarters with some trifling toys and pleasures which have attracted you. You linger about, you do not quite like to part with them immediately. You say, "I shall be off very soon," and you *intend* it, but you do not go. Hark! the trumpet sounds; the armies are in close collision; they are fighting! The victory is declared! Banners of triumph are borne along in glorious order, and you, you who ought to have been there, to die or to conquer, are branded as a coward. You kept away from the field—you were *too late.*

Now, dear brethren, apply all this to spiritual things. There is the plea which you have to make to the Great King, the forgiveness of your sins, the saving of your soul, but there is the tidal river up which you have to make your way in order to reach the King. Do you not see? it is the flowing stream of the Blood of Jesus. Take it at the flood—take it while it is there; go up with it at once, for, let me tell you, the ebb-tide is already beginning. Take care of being *too late.*

There is one very dear to you ready to die—you

wish to be there with him before he dies, you *intend* to be there—do you not see? it is yourself; your own soul. You intend to anticipate that death, and be ready before hand, so as not to die eternally. You know the means by which you can do so. Stimulated, urged on, terrified, anxious just now, under an excited alarm, your *intention* is very earnest. But you linger. You know what you ought to do, and you know the way to do it. To save that dying soul Jesus stands before you, beckoning you, calling you, "Come unto Me and I will refresh you;" "Though your sins be red as scarlet, they shall be as white as wool;" "I have come into the world to save sinners;" "Take my yoke upon you, for my yoke is easy and my burden is light," "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life." You see this, "This is My Body," and you see this, "This is My Blood;" Feed upon it. By My Sacrament you shall receive strength. If you reject It, you have no life in you; if you accept It, you have eternal life, and I will raise you up at the Last Day." Yes, all that, as instructed by the Church, you know. But you linger like Lot's wife, looking back upon Sodom, and you loiter, carried away by pleasures which deceive you, cares which trouble you, or difficulties of the world which entangle you, and you say "Yes, very true, very good, I will do it; but by and bye, not just yet. My intention is to do it as you see. Here is my lamp. But "by and bye" "next year," not this Easter, next Easter; and so the time goes on. The soul

droops, death comes, now you are in a great trouble and hurry, and find your lamp gone out—now you knock at the door very earnestly indeed—now you say, "Lord, Lord," but "the door is shut." The spirit has fled to the God Who gave it. You are nothing but a dead corpse—you are *too late.*

Finally, there is the great battle of life. And there stand before you the victory and the triumph of the good soldier of Jesus. Look up. There stands before you clothed in His glory on high, the great God and Father; and on the right hand of His glory the only begotten Son; and all around, the Holy Ghost is sending forth the bright beams of the Triune Majesty; and there stand round about Him the Cherubim and Seraphim, the Thrones, and Dominions and Powers, and the Angels and the Archangels! There stand also the Apostles and Evangelists, and the Blessed Virgin, Mother of God. Into the presence of all these we have come, soldiers that have won the battle.

"Onward, Christian soldiers,
Onward to the war."

It is so; We have fought in many a fight—the good fight of faith, and we have gained our victory.

And now behold. There come the martyrs, and bring their blood; confessors that lay down their sufferings; the virgins clothed in white that bring their purity; matrons that have laboured in good works; and children that have, as the Holy Inno-

cents, even in their short career, done something, and they give themselves to God, washed in the Blood of the Lamb. And all these wave their palms—tokens of victory; and they put on their crowns—signs of their royalty; and they sing glad pæans of triumph—the cries of their never-ceasing joy. The battle is over.

Ah, then, dear brethren, I hope it will not be so with you, but it may be. Not having fought your battle with us—not having kept your vow of the fidelity of the good soldier of Christ with us; having been occupied all your life with good intentions, and not fulfilling them; having brought lamps, but no oil; having said, "Lord, Lord," but not doing His will; having looked on in the indolence of the world, and never stirring up your soul to the actual contest with the enemy of souls which is daily before you: you, seeing us and all the others rejoicing in this exceeding great joy, will try to come in. You will call out. You will knock at the door. You will earnestly seek an entrance. You will be anxiously looking for some loophole through which you may get in; but no, no, no! the door is shut—you are TOO LATE!

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